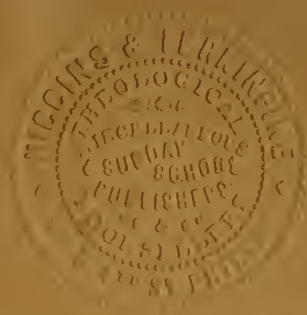




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A
NEW LIFE
OF
SUMMERFIELD.

BY
WILLIAM M. WILLETT.

"SUMMERFIELD was not a man of every day; there is yet fire enough in his ashes to kindle a flame that will be much longer-lived than himself."—MONTGOMERY.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1857.

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TO
ALL WHO LOVE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

IN SINCERITY AND TRUTH,

This Work,

THE LIFE OF ONE

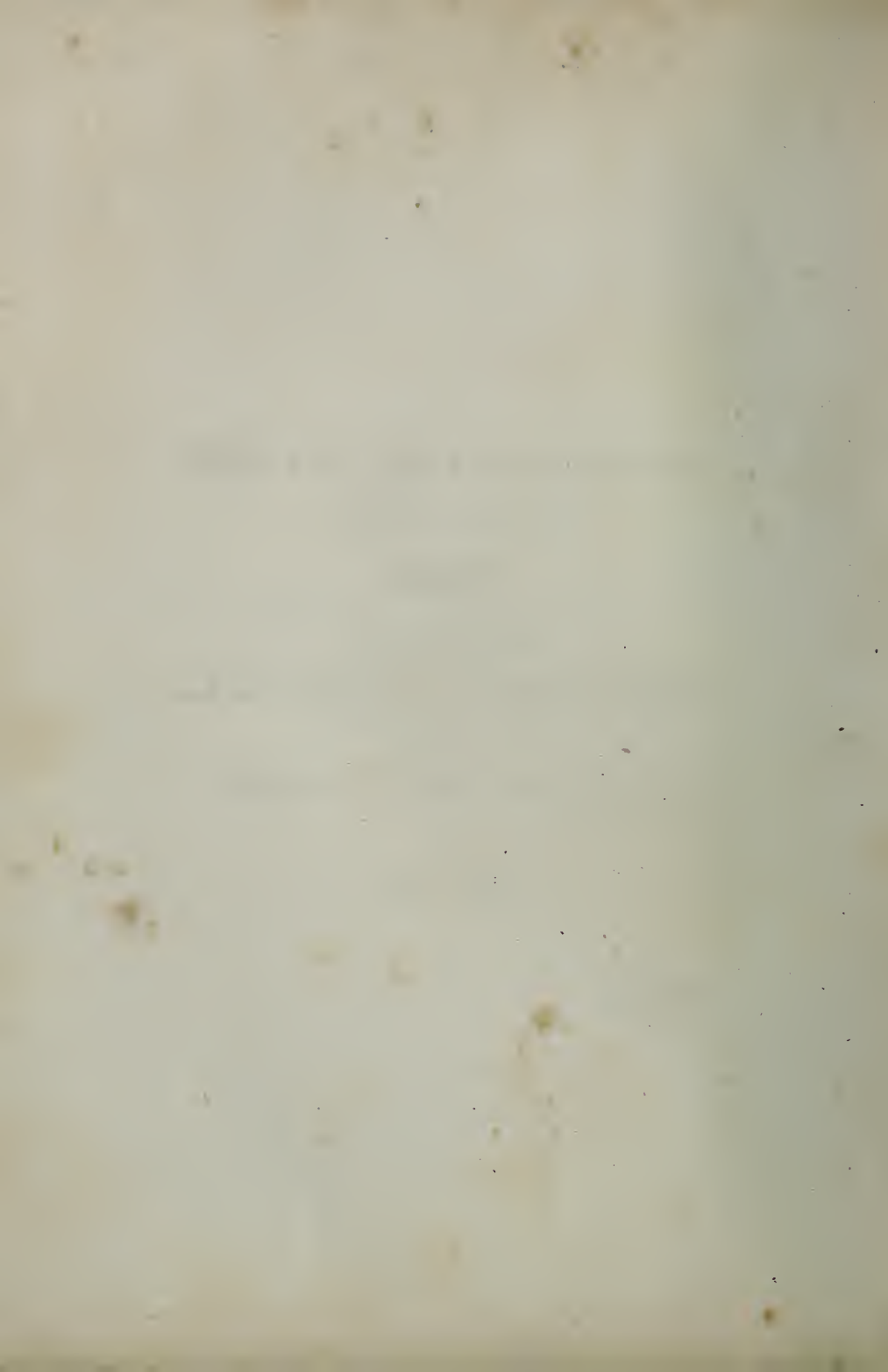
WHOSE SPIRIT EMBRACED ALL WHO BORE THIS MARK,

IS

AFFECTIONATELY AND RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.



P R E F A C E.

AFTER the lapse of many years, a "New Life of Summerfield" is given to the public.

In this work, the writer has felt anxious to bring into stronger relief, if possible, the religious and ministerial character of Mr. Summerfield. It is the piety of this devoted man of God—his religious experience—to which he wishes to give prominence, (whether he has succeeded in this or not;) it is his position and example as a Christian minister on which he mostly insists. If he has been so happy as to present these aspects of his character and life in a clearer and more impressive point of view, this work will not have been wholly in vain. The fire that burned within Mr. Summerfield's bosom he drew from heaven; and, if that kindles these pages, they will burn with a holy intensity. If not, as a smouldering fire they will consume away into emptiness and smoke.

But the writer surely does entertain the hope and the humble but firm trust that this work will be useful, that it will tend to promote the glory of God, and that the blessing of God will in an especial manner accompany it. It is written with this intent, and no other. He has spared no pains, in the comparatively narrow limits within which he has restricted himself, to do justice, according to the best of his ability and judgment, to the subject of this work; and, to some extent at least,—if not to the full extent of his wishes and hopes,—he trusts he has succeeded. It is, however, with others, more fully than with himself, to decide this important question, according to the gracious effect which the reading of the book may exert upon their hearts and lives.

If love to a person, or a sense of incalculable religious benefit received, were the measure of success, or constituted the standard of

excellence, then the success of this work would be insured beforehand; for truly can it be said hereof, as of the box of spikenard wherewith the woman in the Gospel anointed Jesus' feet before his precious death and burial, that it proceeds from a love to the dear subject of it which burns with far greater intensity this day than it did thirty-five years ago, and from a sense of the good the writer derived from the ministry of Mr. Summerfield, far, far beyond what he was conscious of at any former period of his life. Should, then, ill betide this work,—should a frown and a cold reception meet it on its first entrance into life,—should even the language of cold and measured reprehension be heard,—it will receive, he doubts not, this plaudit of Jesus:—"He hath done what he could."

THE AUTHOR.

PHILADELPHIA, November 25, 1856.

THE ENGRAVING.

We deem it not out of place for a moment to advert to the engraved portrait of Mr. Summerfield which accompanies this volume. We think it justly claims consideration as a pictorial illustration of more than ordinary interest,—as a *true and expressive likeness*, independently of whatever artistic merit it may be allowed to possess. It is known that the original painting from which this engraving has been made was from the hand of an artist whose intimate acquaintance with Mr. Summerfield gave him the most favorable opportunities for the execution of the work,—the engraving itself having been completed by one who was also personally acquainted and strongly impressed with the appearance and countenance of Mr. Summerfield.

As the value of a portrait depends mainly upon its fidelity in giving the characteristic lineaments of the individual, these facts are not without interest to such as desire to recall the personal appearance of the subject of this memorial.

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SUMMERFIELD.

CHAPTER I.

HIS EARLY LIFE AND HAPPY CONVERSION TO GOD.

THE subject of this memoir, early dying, but living ever so many years in the very little space to which his *active* ministry was limited, doing an incalculable amount of good within that very brief period, was born in Preston, Lancashire, England, on the 31st of January, 1798. His parents were William and Amelia Summerfield, both members of the Wesleyan Society, the father a local preacher in the connection; both living and dying in the faith and hope of the gospel. Of nine children, five sons and four daughters, (three dying in infancy,) John, whose career we are to trace, was the eldest son; designated by his father to the ministry ere he was born, and named by this favorite name, his father naming him in hope of his future high and holy calling.

Of his early life it is not our design to say much. When quite young he sustained a great loss in the death of his mother, she dying when he was yet in the thirteenth year of his age. In one of his sermons to children he

speaks of the sad void then made as yet sensibly felt by him and still present to his mind; as one that he mourned over even unto that day; and his biographer tells us that "he hardly ever spoke of the glorified throng in heaven without naming his mother." The eldest sister of Mr. Summerfield has given us a pleasing account of this pious and gentle mother, and of her influence over the minds of her children. Among other traits she records the following:—"I have seen her," she writes, "beckon to her boys when with a dozen associates of their own age and in the midst of some interesting games, the hour having come for *them* to leave the playground,—and it was a rare thing for them to evince the least displeasure."*

In the last sickness of Mrs. Summerfield, her physician having recommended the sea-air, she went to Liverpool; and so it was that, of all the children, John was the only one that accompanied his mother. When we recollect what he afterward did for his two younger sisters, showing the care and tenderness almost of a mother to them, as well as the fond assiduity of the kindest of brothers, we may form some conception of the tender love he showed this beloved parent, as for four successive months he watched her slow but sure decay; he, with an aptness far beyond his years, to some extent at least, ministering to each returning want, and with love unfailing soothing her dying hours.

It was about a year after the death of his wife—the wife of his youth,—one who to her husband was ever a wise

* "Mrs. Blackstock's Recollections of Summerfield's Father and Mother."
See New Edit. of Life, p. 327.

counsellor and judicious friend—that Mr. Summerfield, Sen., removed with his family from England to Dublin, Ireland, he having some opening in the way of his business in that city.

Mr. Summerfield, Sen., who was an engineer and iron-founder, and who for a number of years had been successfully engaged in business in Preston, meeting with serious reverses, had been compelled to take this step; other results also following this change in his affairs. Among these was the sudden removal of his eldest son John from Fairfield, or rather from the Moravian school at this place: a school of no small repute, where he had already spent five years and had profited not a little. Here his oratorical gift had already developed itself: his recitations at school, and, indeed, among his friends at home, were of so marked a character as already to attract notice and win applause.

After leaving school, for a while young Summerfield acted as clerk in a mercantile house in Liverpool, his services being especially confined to the *French* correspondence of the house; but, the house failing about the time of the family's removal to Ireland, he lost his situation, and, with the rest, went with his father to Dublin.

It was in 1812 this change of residence took place. From this time till in the year 1817 we have but little to say of Mr. Summerfield that is favorable; his life was little else than a blank,—a wide waste, not wholly unimproved but only a small part of it spent as it should have been.

In a letter to his eldest sister, dated April 19, 1819, he himself thus refers to this period:—"As my father wrote to you some time ago, you have some idea of the change which by the grace of God has been effected in me. You

know what I *was*; God knows what I *am*. If you except family and filial affection, of which I was *never devoid*, you may fill up the catalogue of my conduct in any way you please. Truly,—

“‘I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.’”

But, during this period, this child of many prayers—for whose welfare, as he watched patiently and lovingly by her bedside in her last sickness, a mother's prayers had often ascended to heaven, and on whom a father's counsels for the present seemed to be lost—was not wholly left to himself. If for a time he would restrain prayer and cast off fear, at another time he would be deeply convinced of sin and harrowed by remorse; and, stung as by a scorpion, he would indeed feel that “the way of the transgressor is hard.” But, if repenting now and then for his evil ways, and often purposing amendment, yet these good resolutions after a time would be broken; again and again they were formed only soon again to pass away “like the early cloud and the morning dew;” some five years elapsing ere he was delivered from the dreadful bondage of sin and Satan.

His conduct as a son during this period was refractory and perverse in no small degree. He would at times leave home without giving notice of his absence; going up to London and spending his time there in sin and folly; not returning till he was forced to do so, when, like the prodigal in the gospel, his money was all spent. Among other sins to which he was addicted was gambling; his biographer telling us that he became quite an adept in the practice, playing at length what is called a *high game*.

Thus he went on, in the frowardness of his heart and blindness of his mind, with a high hand and a daring arm, sinning against God, greatly wronging his own soul, exposed every instant to the just anger of a holy and righteous God, himself seemingly insensible that it was only as if by a brittle thread his life all this while hung suspended.

But a happy change at length occurs; this befalling in the fall of the year 1817. During one of those intervals of repentance to which reference has been made, while walking along one of the streets of Dublin, his sins rising in review before him and staring him in the face, his own case was clearly presented to his mind under the figure of the *barren fig-tree*. In the first religious-experience or "fellowship" meeting he ever attended, he said it was under this similitude or figure he first had a full view of his lost condition as a sinner, and saw that if he was then alive it was because God, in answer to the pleading voice of mercy, had not long before cut him down as a cumberer of the ground. On his soul he felt the wrath of God to abide, and his language was, "What shall I do to be saved?" He said to the writer of this memoir, "he roared aloud in the anguish and disquietude of his heart; the terrors of hell gat hold upon him; he found trouble and sorrow."

The following is his own account, in a letter to his sister,* of what he suffered from the terrors of the Almighty ere he found peace to his soul, and of the joy he felt when God pardoned his sins:—"Long was my struggle for

* Mrs. Blackstock was at this time married, and, with her husband, Mr. James Blackstock, resided in this country.

mercy; severe was my agony; often tempted to suicide to rid myself of the pangs of a wounded spirit; but finally the Lord lifted upon me the light of his countenance, and spoke to my heart as with an audible voice:—‘I have loved thee with an everlasting love.’ Oh, how was I melted! I wept; but they were tears of joy: I groaned; but they were unutterable groans. Heaven proclaimed, ‘My beloved is mine;’ and my heart replied, ‘I am his.’”

Previously to this he had joined class—the class of Mr. Patrick French—while yet groaning under the weight and burden of sin. He had no disposition to conceal the sense he had of sin; nor was he ashamed to avow what he felt in the presence even of his former gay associates, much less to hide his convictions from the people of God. He had once taken a bold stand for sin and the devil; he now, with not a whit the less courage, takes an equally bold and decided stand for God and the truth.

Among those of the society who were ready to take him by the hand and lead him to Christ was William Haughton, himself a brand lately plucked from the burning. This William Haughton had been a notorious sinner: he belonged to what was called the “Hell-fire Club,” and was a leader in wickedness; but, under the preaching of a common soldier, Richard Mellen, whose regiment was at this time stationed at the barracks, first his wife was converted to God, and then himself.

The wife of William Haughton, having found the Lord through the preaching of this highly-honored servant of the Most High, invited him to hold meeting in her house. This was not very pleasing to her husband, and he threatened to turn him out. One day, attempting to carry

out this design, he approached the preacher as he was repeating these lines :—

“If you tarry till you’re better,
You will never come at all.”

The words struck Haughton to the heart as he approached Richard Mellen, standing at the time in the doorway, the room filled with those assembled to hear the word of the Lord at his mouth. Haughton, repeating the words,—

“If you tarry till you’re better,
You will never come at all,”—

and crying out in the anguish of his soul, fell to the floor. The word of God had struck him as the stone taken by David from the brook had hit in the forehead Goliath; from that instant all peace forsook him, and he rested not until he found a *new*, unknown peace in believing in Jesus.

William Haughton was an edge-tool maker. He was a man of some property, (though before his conversion he was an intemperate man, and was perhaps under the influence of liquor when he made the attempt to turn Mellen out of his house,) owning the house in which he lived. The basement or cellar of his house, which was a large and commodious room, he used as a workshop, and this was now appropriated to prayer-meetings; and here it was, with a few soldiers from the barracks, with William Haughton as leader, that Summerfield obtained the evidence of the forgiveness of his sins and was enabled to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The first word the new convert uttered when born of

God, born of the Spirit, was "Glory!" Not his the pitiful cry or wail of the infant when first born into this world of sorrow, but "Glory!" the cry of his new-born soul. His tongue, like Zacharias's, was loosed to sing the high praises of God; his soul was filled with joy unspeakable and was full of glory. As he himself informs us, he was melted into love; tears of holy joy ran down his cheeks; heaven put forth its arms to embrace the repenting sinner; and a *voice* in his heart said, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

This his spiritual birth took place early in October, not long after he had joined class, which was on the 28th of the previous month, (September.) And now was fulfilled the joy of his father: his son that was dead was alive; he that was lost was found.

CHAPTER II.

BEGINS TO PRAY AND EXHORT IN PUBLIC.

AT the time of his conversion Mr. Summerfield was residing with his father in Lower Mount Street, the family at this time being in a state of deep poverty. There were times even when the family wanted bread. Mr. Summerfield, Sen., who, as we have seen, had known prosperity, bore this change in his affairs with amazing meekness. He bowed his head submissively to the stroke. He seems to have felt his poverty as coming from the hand of the Lord because he did not obey his voice in entering the regular work of the ministry. The son says of the father that during all these days of darkness he remarked that he "was specially thankful to God for afflictions; nay, he even prayed to be further chastised, if God saw it expedient, that he might be drawn nearer and nearer to his Father."

While wading through this deep temporal distress, how much heavier the daily burden of the father from the conduct of the son!—the irregular and even dissipated life this son led perhaps adding to the pecuniary embarrassments of the family, (certainly not lightening them any;*) but

* In a letter to Bishop Emory, dated New York, December 19, 1822, Mr. Summerfield, referring to this period of his life, alluding to his father, says,

now God for sorrow had given him joy in the happy conversion and reformation of this his eldest son. Not now his heart torn with pain, riven with anguish, that this the son of many prayers, infatuated by his passion for the theatre or the gaming-table, was spending the hours of the night in sin, in wild folly, in the haunts of vice, while the father in his secret chamber was pouring forth his prayers to God in his behalf. This cause of sorrow was now removed, and thus the load of this pious and afflicted parent greatly lightened.

In becoming a member of Whitefriar Street Church, or rather joining class on *probation*, Mr. Summerfield was highly favored in the class he joined, Mr. Patrick French being the leader. Mr. French early discerned the promising qualities of the young convert, perceiving not only the superiority of his talents, but the depth and ardor of his piety. He saw in young Summerfield a rare combination of gifts and grace, and his welfare lay near his heart. Being called of God, not long after this, to leave Dublin as a missionary to the West Indies, he warmly recommended him to Mr. Lamb, who was a teacher in Dublin, a member of society, and also a local preacher. On leaving, these were his words to this worthy brother:—"Brother Lamb, I am going from you, perhaps never to return. Remember now my last request: take particular care of Brother Summerfield; make him known to all your brethren, and he will one day shine in the world and in the church of God."

"I have been Benoni in time past, but now he calls me Benjamin."—*New Ed of Life, &c.*, p. 167.

After his departure from Dublin, but ere he had left London, Mr. Summerfield wrote him a long letter, stating many interesting facts in relation to himself and begging his counsel; to which he received the following reply. The reply is short, but most weighty; the advice given was to this effect:—"Wait God's appointed time in all circumstances. I wrote to Mr. Shaw about you; he will, I know, do what he can. God is your best friend; trust him: when you least expect it, his promise will be confirmed. Let prayer be your constant exercise; value the Bible as your faithful companion; rise early in the morning for reading and prayer, and frequent the ordinances."

What more could he say? And he found in Mr. Summerfield one who faithfully carried out his advice, and whose growth in grace was in proportion to his fidelity to all the particulars mentioned. A few extracts will sufficiently show this.

On Thursday, the 1st day of January, 1818, young Summerfield—this was the appellation *soon* given him by his brother preachers in Ireland—attended watch-night in Whitefriar Street Chapel. He who so often before, in previous years,—

"Had passed the guilty night
In revelling and frantic mirth;
The creature then his sole delight,
His happiness the things of earth,"—

is now on his knees in the house of prayer, his language now,—

"For me suffice the season past;
I choose the better part at last."

The following is his own language in connection with this occasion:—"I felt the presence of the Lord, and my

soul was fed with good things. Oh that I may prove faithful this year! I have often dedicated myself to God on a similar occasion, but as often have violated my engagements; yet this year I am determined, let others do as they will, I will serve the Lord."

On the following Sabbath evening, in the same church, according to the Wesleyan custom, after the more public services there was on the part of the society the "renewal of the covenant," as it is called; on this occasion also Mr. Summerfield was present, uniting with the rest in this act, though, as he says, he did so "with fear and trembling."

The renewal of the covenant protracted the services a little later than usual, so that it was not till eleven o'clock that night he made this beautiful and affecting entry in his diary; this young man alone with his God, he indeed the spouse of Christ, "married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead."*

"On my way home," he writes, "I was musing upon what I had done," (referring to the renewal of the covenant;) "saw that I had married myself to Christ, to take him for better for worse, through honor and dishonor; and I saw the beauty of that passage in the Revelations:—'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, and the bride, the Lamb's wife, hath made herself ready.' Oh, may I be pure, and chaste, and spotless, and worthy of this honor!"

In the course of this same month (January 24, 1818) we have the following entry in his diary, showing how graciously the Lord was dealing with him, and how

* Rom. vii. 4.

with power the work of God was going on in his soul:—

“In surveying the past year,” he writes, “I am lost in thought. The arm of the Almighty has been made bare in our behalf, and has wrought miraculous deliverances for us. We have known the want of bread last year, and yet in this state our necessity proved the Lord’s opportunity. O my Father, if my soul ever forget thee may my right hand forget her cunning! Oh that all men would praise the Lord for his wondrous works and for his loving-kindness to the children of men! For my own part, my heart is this evening ready to burst with a gust of his praise. Glory! glory! glory!”

A month or two later than this (about the middle of March) we have the following record. It recounts a remarkable manifestation of the divine presence and power, and shows that at this early stage of his Christian experience he was seeking with the most intense desire for the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace; no disposition on his part to rest in the first principles of the doctrine of Christ:—*

“Being on a Sabbath afternoon, with a few other persons, at the house of a friend, he writes:—‘I was never in my life possessed of such feelings. While sitting in silence, the words “I have loved thee with an everlasting love” flashed into my mind in so sweet a manner that I could not contain. I burst into tears: all wondered at the cause. A hymn-book was handed me: I sung and prayed; and

* We quote from the larger edition of the *Memoirs of Summerfield*, p. 82.

that night I received an unction from the Holy One. Glory be to Jesus!"

Filled with love as he was, nay, filled with faith and with the Holy Ghost, with a mind of such intense activity, Mr. Summerfield could not long remain inactive, neither could his shining talents be kept long concealed.

With the beginning of this new year (1818) commenced his public labors for God. In a large room in a house on Whitefriar Street, not far from the church, (a room rented by the society for this purpose,) prayer-meetings were wont to be held, which Mr. Summerfield at this time was invited to attend. He did so the evening following watch-night, the meeting being especially appointed to pray for the revival of the work of God in the society this year. While he was on his knees he was asked to pray for the first time in public. He did so; and says, "I began in weakness; but—glory to God!—good was done, and I ended in great power."

Not long after this, in the same room, he for the first time told what God had done for his soul. It was at this meeting he mentioned the circumstance of his being brought to a full sense of his guilt and danger as a sinner, of the amazing mercy of God to him in sparing his life amid such abounding wickedness and impiety on his part, in connection with the *barren fig-tree*,—the barren fig-tree an exact and striking representation of himself. One who was present at this meeting said the effect of what he said was very great, a most gracious influence accompanying his words. After he had finished, the person who gave us this little account, then young in years, but who had already dedicated herself to God in the bloom of her

youthful days, was called on to pray,—her prayer following the experience of young Summerfield. It was a sacred hour; and to this now mother in Israel the perfume of it, as the perfume of a flower, has not yet fled; dear also to her heart is the memory of Summerfield; she a living witness of the beauty and exemplary consistency of his early Christian life.

From this point, step by step, but rapidly, this youthful disciple and lover of Jesus went on. He attended prayer-meetings; he took part in them; soon he became one of the members of the "Praying Association," which required of him in his turn to ascend the desk, (not the pulpit,) to read a chapter in the Bible, and to commence the services with prayer. By an easy and natural transition he soon proceeded to exhort,—his first exhortation being delivered on the evening of January 18 of this year, at the conclusion of a prayer-meeting held in Sweeny's Lane.

In all this, as in the case of John the Baptist in *his* early beginnings, the hand of the Lord was with him. The second time he prayed in public, he says, "Three souls were set at liberty from the bondage of their sins;" at another meeting, "several were set at liberty;" and again, "I concluded by prayer, and the Lord owned me *wonderfully*;" and so likewise on various other occasions. God evidently, in a most marked manner, everywhere blessed the labors and owned the words of this his youthful servant. From the very first he was as a "torch of fire in a sheaf."

But, while thus faithful to God and abounding in every good word and work, he sought also to approve himself a good son to his father; with his ready pen assisting him in

the settlement of his accounts, and rendering him on all occasions such services as were in his power. His stubborn will was broken, and he was as docile and tractable as beforetime he was perverse and ungovernable.

He was also a most dear and loving brother to his two younger sisters, himself their patient and assiduous instructor, their counsellor, guide, and friend. So far as an elder brother could, he sought to supply to them the place of the mother they had lost. Indeed, in some sense and to some extent, in this the time of their deep poverty, Mr. Summerfield took upon himself, with such aid as his little sisters could render, the chief care of the house; happy in any way to atone for and amend, so far as a change of conduct could do this, the unhappy past.

Willing, however, as Mr. Summerfield was to redeem the past and to assist his father, from the very first his mind was drawn to the ministry. He thought of but this one thing; and if for a little at times, owing to the circumstances by which he was surrounded, his mind was diverted from this work, it soon reverted to it, and that with greater force than before, as a body of water gains *momentum* or force by any obstacle that may temporarily impede its progress. His gifts soon made him known; the loveliness of his life, the beauty of his piety, made him beloved. From thence the step was easy and swift to the office of a local preacher; and we find him preaching, though as yet in a somewhat *informal* manner, at six o'clock in the morning, at Gravel Walk Chapel, Thursday, 28th of April, 1818, only about *nine months* having elapsed since first he joined class.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST SERMON IN DUBLIN.

WE have spoken of Mr. Summerfield's first *informal* attempt to preach. A word or two more in reference to this.

It was customary in Dublin, at this period, to have, every morning in the week, at six o'clock, religious services; those who assembled at this early hour giving this time to the service of God ere the labors of the day began. These early-morning services Mr. Summerfield used to attend, esteeming them no doubt a great privilege. On the morning to which we have referred (Thursday, April 23, 1818) he attended as usual; not in Whitefriar Street, but at Gravel Walk Chapel. The preacher, Mr. McDowall, having sung and prayed, called on Mr. Summerfield, without any previous notification, to conduct the rest of the services. Unexpectedly as he was called upon, he did not hesitate; and though as yet he had not attempted to speak from any passage of Scripture, yet, with that readiness of mind that ever distinguished him, he turned at once to the fourth chapter of Second Timothy, reading part of the same and speaking from it.

At this same early meeting, not long before, for the first time he was asked by "dear Brother McDowall," as he

calls him, to pray; when his heart was so full that, to use his own words, he "could scarcely utter words for weeping." God having opened in his soul the crystal fountain, there was no end to its flowing. And now, in the same place, by the same brother, he is called upon to read and exhort. These were the singularly striking and appropriate words with which this "fervent, fearless, self-sacrificing preacher," as he is called by Montgomery, commenced his ministry; the chapter beginning as follows:—"I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom, preach the word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine;" and so on, probably, to the eighth verse inclusive. Appropriate words these were indeed for one who so fully imbibed the spirit of them; himself indeed worthy of a place with apostles and martyrs, he, too, as another Timothy, "a good minister of the Lord Jesus, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine," whereunto even then also he had "attained."

On the following Monday, at the early-morning meeting, he made his second attempt,—this a more formal one than the other. Having had previous notice, he prepared himself somewhat to speak from these words:—"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."*

* Eph. i. 13, 14.

In reference to these two occasions we have the following brief entries. Of the first he says, "I spoke fluently, and, though I have a defect in my speech, I felt nothing of it. I take it to be a token of good from God." Of the second he says, "I felt great liberty, and I hope good was done."

These initiatory steps were followed by one of a yet more imposing character. We refer now to his *trial sermon* which he was called upon to preach,—this preparatory to an application for license as a local preacher. This was fixed for Sabbath, at two o'clock in the afternoon, in Whitefriar Street Chapel. This is what we suppose Mr. Summerfield refers to when, in Cork, on the review of this to him so memorable year, he says, "In this *one* year I have first prayed in public and begun to preach, and preached in the metropolis of Ireland in our largest chapel and at the most public time."

Whitefriar Street Chapel retained at this time much of its ancient simplicity. It was not till several years after this that the chapel was "beautifully repaired."* At the time of which we write, there were the huge square pillars that supported the gallery, the plain seats or benches, the large chandelier in the centre, and the floor sprinkled with fine white sand.

Above the gallery was what was called "the lobby," supported by pillars similar to those below; the lobby answering all the purposes of a basement with us. Here the various classes met; the rooms, however, so arranged

* See the very interesting biographical narrative of Matthew Lanktree, over forty years a Wesleyan minister in Ireland, page 334.

that they could open into one, thus making one large room where the monthly breakfasts and the New-year festival used to be held.

The chapel itself was a little back from the street, and was reached through a covered archway; on one side of which was the Book Room and the Widows' Home, on the other the Female Orphan Asylum,—all the property of the society.

In the rear of the Widows' Home was the superintendent preacher's house, with its little yard in front, and yet another house in the rear of this, occupied by the second preacher; the whole forming an assemblage or group of buildings, if interesting on no other account, deeply so on account of their association with the early history of Methodism in the city of Dublin. The old chapel was as the vine, and the adjacent buildings as the branches of the vine,—the one the genuine and natural product of the other. But all is changed now: the property has passed out of the hands of the Wesleyan Methodists, and Centenary Chapel, on St. Stephen's Green, has taken the place of Old Whitefriar Street Chapel.

But in Summerfield's time Whitefriar Street Chapel stood in all its plain, homely garb, very nearly as it was when Wesley and Fletcher preached in it; and those "holy women," Mrs. Fletcher and Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers, prayed and spoke in the class-rooms. Here, at two o'clock of a Sabbath afternoon, young Summerfield rose to speak; here first he fairly spread his pinions for his soaring flight. The text chosen was John xiv. 27:—"Peace I leave with you."

Though Mr. Summerfield was at this time twenty-one

years of age, he looked much younger. His appearance was very youthful, and this appearance was increased by his dress. For a coat he had little else than a jacket. This, with his youthful face and slight, delicate frame, gave him the appearance of a boy. When spoken to afterward of the coat and how like a boy he looked, "Why," said he, "I am but a boy."

Under this expression, perhaps, the young Summerfield hid a little his own poverty. In a dream or vision of the night that he had at this time, he speaks of one of the preachers (Mr. Cobaine) coming to him and saying, "It would be better if he would get a coat of a more suitable color for the work of God." Upon this he remarked, "What can I do? I have no means; but, Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord will provide."

But, youthful as his appearance was, and his dress, from his poverty, perhaps hardly suitable to the place or the occasion, not unfurnished was he for the work before him. But it is not our intention to give a synopsis of this sermon: an examination of it will show that it is but little inferior to any of his published discourses. We allude to it rather to refer to one point that does not appear in the printed discourse, and which was mentioned to us by one who was present at the time and heard it. In speaking of the peace which the world gives its votaries, he remarked that it could not be relied on, inasmuch as it is often taken away by the very hand which gave it. This led him to refer to the story of the "Exiles of Siberia,"—the Russian nobleman, the father of Elizabeth, (the main facts of the story essentially true though under the guise of fiction,) being a signal instance of a man elevated by his sovereign

to the height of power to-day and banished to Siberia to-morrow. This gave him an opportunity *incidentally* to draw a picture of the journey of Elizabeth from Siberia to Moscow; which he did in such a manner that he made the whole scene to live again, Mr. Summerfield, in description, possessing the power and genius of a painter. He drew Elizabeth to the life; and you saw her wending her lonely way through the wild wastes of Russia on this errand of love. We well know his descriptive power, and can readily imagine the interest he imparted to this; and great indeed was the interest excited in the congregation by this magic painting, living yet as vividly in the mind of our narrator as on the Sabbath afternoon, long years ago, when first he heard it.

But this was only by the way: it started up in his mind as a creation, and was wholly subsidiary to the great truths he wished to enforce. We mention it here just to show that in his first sermon he drew, by way of illustration, one of those pictures which often afterward he introduced, but which were always designed by him either directly to impress some great truth, or, as in the present case, were suggested by the force of association, or because there was some point of connection between the truth presented and the picture drawn which the picture would assist to unfold or impress.

Never was this done for the sake merely of effect. Far, far was Mr. Summerfield from any thing like this. He drew his pictures as the great master-painter does his on the sky when the day breaketh, or at its close, as pencilling his glory on the sheeted firmament; every soft and varied streak of early light proclaiming *his* handiwork in the

morning, and the more gorgeous drapery of setting day, with its deep sapphire coloring, or emerald brightness, or purple splendor, making known the glory of his majesty and the riches of his power in the evening. Thus, with this youthful painter of heaven's own truths, when with his inspired pencil he touched the canvas and drew his inimitable pictures, he sought thereby not the glory of the creature but of the Creator. He did but use the gift Heaven gave him to allure to the skies,—to draw thitherward eyes gazing ever on little else than earth's fading glories.

The attendance at the chapel this Sabbath afternoon was not larger than usual. The chapel was full; but this was usually the case. The time had not yet come,—a few months were yet to elapse ere the fame of his name would fill not only to its utmost capacity the chapel and all the open space about it, but the covered archway leading to the street; such was the eagerness to hear him, such the charm of his eloquence.

During the brief period that elapsed from the delivery of this sermon until the removal of the family to Cork, Mr. Summerfield continued to preach more or less, but not again in Whitefriar Street Chapel on so public an occasion. Though not elected a member of the "Stranger's Friend Society," yet he received appointments from the association and preached for them; he also entered such other doors as were opened, both in the city and country. On one Sabbath-day, (July 19,) just before he left Dublin for Cork, he speaks of walking many miles and preaching twice the same day; preaching so much at length, and with such earnestness, (we might almost say vociferation, for Mr.

Summerfield told us when first he began to preach he spoke often at the very top of his voice and with all his might and main,) that he was "quite hoarse;" "yet," he adds, "I am neither weak nor weary: I could go again, if called to it, to a third meeting."

At another time, at the early meeting at Gravel Walk Chapel, he was again called upon to speak, when God most eminently owned the word of his servant. During the opening prayer he made, he said, "The Holy Ghost came down; nothing but *loud* weeping and echoing Amens were heard in all parts of the house, and my own voice lost. The power was evidently of God and not of man. I believe many will have cause to remember it."

But, with all the power that accompanied his words and the remarkable superiority of his talents, notwithstanding his unequalled oratorical powers, Mr. Summerfield was not at this time appreciated in Dublin. It was not until after an absence of some six months, and when with great power he had preached the gospel in Cork and the region round about, then, and not until then, did Dublin learn to prize the jewel that had been hidden in her midst. In speaking of this to the writer, he alluded to the saying of Jesus to the people of Nazareth, that "no prophet is accepted in his own country," and, with the modesty which was such an adornment to him, said that "his absence from Dublin, his departure at that particular juncture, and subsequent return under somewhat favorable circumstances, were the chief and leading causes of his after success and popularity in that city."

But a change, an important change, now took place. His father having procured a situation as manager in a

foundry in Cork, wrote to his son to join him; young Summerfield leaving Dublin for Cork on the 23d of July, 1818. On Sunday, the 19th, as we have seen, he had preached in the country; thus closing his labors in this section for the present. On the Thursday following he set out, reaching Cork Friday evening; a distance of one hundred and twenty-four miles from Dublin. His home for the present, it seems, was in Miller Street, in the house of the lady (Mrs. Barnes) who owned the iron-establishment of which his father had the charge. His father received and welcomed him with great love, and the lady of the house also received him kindly, and he soon felt himself at home in his new residence.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS TENDERNESS OF CONSCIENCE.

BEFORE we proceed further with our account of Mr. Summerfield, we must tarry a while—this being a favorable opportunity to do so—and notice, a little more at large than we have yet done, a most important topic,—his religious experience up to this time. Poorly will we be prepared to appreciate his ministerial career and the power of the word as preached by him, and the glory that as a diadem encircled him in the pulpit, unless we have an insight into those deeper workings of the heart by which he was fitted for the work he had to do.

Mr. Summerfield, from the beginning, aimed at a high—at the highest—standard of Christian experience. He did not wish that it should be said of him that he had “received the grace of God in vain.”

Not long before he left Dublin for Cork, under the date of July 13, he thus writes in his diary:—“Heard Gideon Ousely, on loving God with all the *heart, mind, soul, and strength*. Came home, and, after sweet private prayer, retired. I was much blessed under Gideon Ousely, and very near the attainment of the blessing I so much desire. My mind was kept in a sweet frame all the evening.”

Mr. Summerfield from the first believed and was ever

on the full stretch for all the mind of Christ. Hence those references in the beginning of his journal, showing that the least omission pained his well-instructed soul; and his grief if by any act, through worldly society or company, or by the want of watchfulness over his words, temper, or spirit, he in any wise grieved the Holy Spirit or marred the image of Christ in himself. He saw in the light of eternity—yea, in its full unclouded light—that he had been bought with a price, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from his former vain conversation and ungodly life, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; and that, therefore, in no sense whatever was he any longer *his own*. Notice his language, already quoted by us, and used on the first day of this present year. “I saw,” he says, “the beauty of that passage in the Revelations, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; and the bride, the Lamb’s wife, hath made herself ready.’ Oh! may I be pure and chaste and spotless, and worthy of this high honor!”

Little things were no longer little to him. Every moment with him counted, every act told. Hence this entry in his diary:—“I called on Wm. —, in — Street, and was pressed into the parlor, where were two ladies, in whose company I spent two hours. I felt it was wrong: my soul suffered loss by it.”

In other words, the conversation was not profitable; perhaps he yielded to the desire, to some extent, of making *himself* agreeable. He lost for a little moment the all-pervading sense of God’s presence, and was conscious of spiritual loss.

Take another entry of a similar kind:—“Went to —’s

on business for my father. They are an ungodly family. I have lost by my visit. A lady was there who compelled me to write an acrostic extempore. I was to blame for yielding." Rising next morning, oppressed by a consciousness of at least partial infidelity and sinful compliance, he says, "Oh that I had not paid that worldly visit last night!"

To the same tenderness of conscience, excited by his exceeding desire to be like God, to be conformed fully to the life and death of his Son, are we to trace the horror even of conscience, the agony of mind, he suffered from taking on one occasion what would seem to many so little a thing as a small quantity of porter with persons with whom he had closed on the part of his father a business transaction. It appears that at first he refused; twice indeed he refused to partake with them of the beverage, but on the third solicitation he yielded. Great, we may say dreadful, was his distress at this; and his language was, "Oh, the mercy that God did not strike me dead!"

This tenderness of conscience,—this exceeding scrupulousness, if you please so to term it,—this holy, jealous watchfulness over every word and action,—marked Mr. Summerfield's religious career from first to last. In one of his discourses on "Christian Holiness" he thus speaks of this most important trait in the Christian character. In enumerating the fruits of righteousness, he says, "Another fruit is *tenderness of conscience*. Oh, how soft, how susceptible of every breath of temptation,—the guardian angel of the soul! Such a man is a decided character; trims not for a moment; does not sacrifice his duty to his interest, as I fear too many do and ruin their souls. Does an incitement

arrive? He guards every avenue of the heart instantly; and without stopping to gaze upon the apple, knowing that sin instantly darkens the eye of the mind, he repels it at once. He sees in the light of God, and his cry is, 'How can I commit this great evil and sin against God?' A man who has not a tender conscience knows nothing of the fruits of righteousness."

And again, pursuing this theme, he adds, "'Oh!' says the world, 'why so much ado? We must yield a little,—tush! we must accommodate a little.' The world always did reproach such a one; and, believe me, it is not one of the least fruits of righteousness to bear the reproach of Christ. The world will let you go on quietly enough if you have no more piety than what pleases them. While you follow the indifferent *rationality* of your neighbors you will never be reproached; but strike out of the beaten path that leads to death, and you are pointed at. And yet this must be so: a sense of the presence of God surrounding you, and a view of eternity, will always inspire you with singularity. You will point to heaven, and lead the way."

He yet further pursues this solemn theme; and in these his own words you see how it was he placed so much stress on what is called "a little thing." Thus he continues the subject:—

"Some say, 'Well, you may do as you please; but if I can get in the lowest place in heaven I am satisfied: I am not ambitious.' Oh, soul! The man who will only walk with Jesus so far as the world keeps pace with him, but will not make one step with him in bearing his cross, is not a *friend*; nay, he is an enemy of the way of righteousness. His low ambition grovels yet on earth. Covet *earnestly* the

highest place; 'the best gift.' Believe me, there is but a hairbreadth line between heaven and hell; and if thou art sporting on the hair thou wilt drop into the burning gulf. There must be a 'being filled with the fruits of righteousness.' '*

Here you catch a glimpse—only a passing glimpse—of the *inner man* Summerfield. He is speaking from the depths of his soul, a sense "of the presence of God surrounding" him ever, and "eternity" ever full in view. Hence it was, on the evening of the day when he had done what *he* knew he should not have done, he tells us, when he returned home, "he knelt down in his agony; but, instead of that sweet intercourse with heaven which he had experienced on the preceding evening, he could not even speak in prayer. His strength had departed; and, amid bursting sighs and with a heavy heart, he retired to rest."

Mr. Summerfield, young as he then was in the Christian life, knew of no such thing as a little sin. On the next morning he writes as follows:—"Rose at half-past five and attempted to pray; but, oh," he exclaims, "how dead was every power of my soul! Father, forgive, forgive!"

It pleased God soon to restore to him the joy of his salvation,—to lift upon him the light of his countenance, never to be so clouded again.

* Sermons, p. 375.

CHAPTER V.

REDEMPTION OF TIME AND STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

ERE yet we enter with Mr. Summerfield the open door which God set before him in Cork, we must speak a little of his diligence in the improvement of his time, and especially of his study of the Holy Scriptures; otherwise, wrong inferences may be drawn of the facility, the ease, with which he rose to unbounded popularity and influence.

We have spoken of his intense love to Christ; of his zeal in his cause and service. This was not wholly without its drawback. It excited disaffection in some minds. The love of God in Christ Jesus so overflowed his soul he hardly knew how either to contain or to express it. Like the man cured of his lameness by Peter and John, at the gate of the temple called "Beautiful," he was ready to "leap" for joy; like the shepherds after what they saw at Bethlehem and heard from the angels, he could not very well avoid "making known abroad" what God had done for his soul, and this not in a very calm, subdued manner, but in the fulness of that ecstatic joy by which he was inspired. This led to the charge, on the part of some, that he was "too enthusiastic;" while others went so far as to express doubts whether as yet he had ever even "experienced the pardon of his sins."

Painful as this was to him, it impeded not his progress: it did but drive him nearer to God. This was his appeal, this his sole reply. He carried his case to God and left it with him. This was his language:—"Thou, God, knowest my heart: thy glory is the sole end I have in view."

Especially did he give himself to prayer. In one place in his diary he says, "This day I have been more earnest at the throne of grace than ever I was before. I have prayed six or seven times at great length that I might not be deceived, and felt my soul melted down in a furnace of love."

Again, under date of March 1 of this same year, (1818,) we have as follows:—"Three hours of this morning were spent in self-examination and prayer." During the forenoon of a day thus begun, he says, "My soul is like liquid gold this morning: it is softened by love. O Father, now lay on thy blessed seal!"

Under date of March 22 of the same month, he says, "At noon, the family then going out to dine, I walked out, pursuant to my design, and went to the Park. Having found a sequestered spot, I wrestled with God till near four o'clock, and was greatly blessed."

Under the date of May 6 we have the following pleasing entry in his diary:—"Rose at five, and retired into the garden for meditation and prayer, which occupied me an hour. I find I should grow in grace more if I prayed in *private* more. All the *public* means of grace will not compensate me in this respect. By the grace of God, and relying on his divine aid, I purpose beginning from this day to pray in *private* five times a day."

In his sermon on "Gospel Holiness," to which we have

already alluded and from which we have quoted, Mr. Summerfield thus further expresses himself on secret prayer:—
“The reason of our declension in the love of God is, we do not seek to know him enough. Do you often visit him? Do you often meet him in secret? Oh, he is lovely! He delights to meet with thee in private. He has things to reveal to thee which he does not unto the world. Go oftener to meet the object of thy love, and thou wilt love him more.”*

During these few memorable months—from his conversion to the time of the removal of the family to Cork and the commencement of his ministerial career—the Sacred Scriptures was almost his sole study. He fed on the word of God. About this time he used to spend more or less of his evenings in social and Christian converse at the house of his young friend to whom we have referred, and the conversation was almost wholly on the word of God. In the course of his reading through the day this or that passage had struck him; some new beauty had presented itself to his mind; he had obtained a clearer insight into some deep scriptural truth. “Oh!” he would say, “is not this beautiful? Is not that precious?” God’s holy word was all his delight: it was sweeter to his taste than honey or the honeycomb.

He had a few other books:—“Taylor’s Key to Romans;” “Clarke’s Commentaries;” “Prideaux’s Connections,” (that invaluable work;) but they bore directly upon the Sacred Scriptures. He studied also at this time the Greek Testament. He went at once to the fountain and source

* Sermon on “Gospel Holiness,” p. 372

of truth. "He searched," says one, "the Scriptures for himself, and searched deeply. He did not rely implicitly on commentators nor on the opinions of others: he labored to open the mine himself and to search for hidden treasures; and he labored successfully."*

We give one or two extracts from his diary, that may serve as a sort of clue or guide to his study of the sacred volume. He rose early to the study of the Bible,—ere the day broke. Under date of February 12, 1818, he writes, "This day I purpose getting a *flint and steel*, as my fire is so often out that I am obliged to lie in bed till daylight, as was the case this morning."

Under date of February 18, we read of his studying Romans early in the morning for an hour and a half; then, on the same day, from half-past ten to half-past twelve; then, again, resuming Romans in the afternoon, from half-past three to half-past five; and then at night, from half-past eight to half-past ten, engaged in reading "Prideaux's Connections."

In another place we read as follows:—"From three to five unceasingly studied Taylor's 'Key;' then spent two hours in reading Clarke." Again, "Studied for two hours Clarke on Hebrews."

The above may serve as a sample, but a most imperfect one, of his entire devotion to the study of the Sacred Scriptures. He gave his whole soul to this study; he concentrated all his powers here: whence it was the word of God dwelt so richly in him. Thus it was, young as he was, he answered so fully to the description of a good

* See Dr. Bond's Introduction to Sermons.

householder who bringeth forth continually things new (as he did) as well as old out of the treasury of the Lord.

Much of his time, also, was spent in the composition of sermons. Whole days, from early morning until the evening, were spent thus. His intimate friend and constant companion, of whom we have already spoken more than once, calling on him one evening at dusk, found him thus employed, having scarcely moved from his seat the whole day. His friend remonstrating with him on his excessive application to study, at the same time remarking that he "would soon destroy himself," he replied that "the love of God in Christ Jesus to him was such he could do no less than he did;" adding that, "if he fell early in the field, he would give his life to the best of all causes." Then, turning to his friend, with that sweet beaming smile and winning manner which were his, he said, "Now, let me read you my sermon."

The text was "What think ye of Christ?" And, after reading what he had written on the interrogation in this form, he turned to his friend and said, "I mean now to address myself to the congregation and ask 'What they suppose Christ thinks of them?'" for never was Mr. Summerfield satisfied unless what he said was brought home by a personal application to the concerns and bosoms of his hearers.

We will dwell no longer at present on these topics, though it is most pleasing to us, and, we think, profitable too, to linger on the early morning of so bright, so unclouded a day,—a day so soon to close. But the limits of this work forbid we should say more; and perhaps suffi-

cient has been said to give the reader some idea of that part of his life which preceded his appearance on so public a stage as that on which God called him to move and whereon he acted so important a part; living, as you may say, more than a lifetime in the two or three years wherein was comprised the whole of his active and efficient ministry: his labors living till now, and the seed growing at this day, yea, producing abundantly, that he planted then.

CHAPTER VI.

COMMENCES HIS MINISTRY AT CORK.

ON Saturday, the day following his arrival at Cork, Mr. Summerfield, in company with his father and the lady who owned the establishment of which his father had charge, went to Cove, a small village situated on an island distant about seven miles from Cork. The Rev. W. Copeland was stationed here at this time, who was among the first of his ministerial brethren to recognise and appreciate his superior qualities. Not long after this, in writing of him to the Rev. W. Stewart, he says of him that, "if he were not a star of the first *magnitude*, he at least promised to be one of the first *brilliancy*." The Cove of Cork, as it is called, is associated with the name and early efforts of Summerfield as the place where he preached his first *missionary* sermon.

Here he spent the Sabbath; the following extract from his diary showing with what feelings he surveyed his new position, and with what care he sought to walk, approving himself as unto God and not as unto man:—

"This morning (Sabbath) I had that leisure which I could not before meet with since I came to Cork. I bought up the moments and earnestly dedicated myself to God in this novel country. I besought his grace to enable me to walk circumspectly before all and preserve a con-

science void of offence. I scarcely recollect so great a sense of the divine presence. May I watch the finger of Providence in this my call to this part of the country, and trace his hand in all the events of my life!"

Notice the last sentence. Mr. Summerfield says, "May I watch the finger of Providence in this my call to this part of the country, and trace his hand in all the events of my life!" As we have before observed, "the hand of the Lord was upon him," and he felt that he moved in the order of God agreeably to this scripture, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." In his sermon, "Be careful for nothing," we have his own views on this point thus expressed:—

"Perhaps you say, 'In things of great moment I do unbosom myself to him, and my griefs; but in small trials I count it presumption.' God looks not at your griefs in this comparative way. It is *man's* to compare things with one another; it is *God's* to see things as they are: he never compares them. Many believe in a *general*, but deny a *particular*, providence: yet this is absurd; for the general is made up of particulars, as particles form the aggregate. He looks not on things as little or as great. He is careful of the least of his creatures as well as of the high archangel next his throne. In him they all live, and he loves every thing that he has made. Hear what himself says:—'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and yet not one of these little birds is forgotten before God.' But he goes lower, and counts it no degradation of his majesty to interest himself in the most perishable substances. Look at the lily, void of life, a fading flower: yet my Father clothes the lilies of the field. Could he go lower? Yes; he has

descended to the lowest: a very hair of my head—so insignificant a thing—cannot perish without him; they are all numbered. ‘He sees the hero and the sparrow fall.’”

In coming to Cork, then, not unmindful was he of his own teachings; and with a wakeful heart did he watch to see the leadings or openings of Providence in this change of scene. But one thing, however, really occupied his mind all this while; and that was the ministry. The way soon opened; God was about to open before him a door which no man would be able to shut.

Some knowledge of Mr. Summerfield must have reached Cork before him,—of his talents and of his piety; for, the first Sabbath he spent in Cork,—without the formality of a request or the interchange of a word to that effect,—it was announced that he would preach that very evening at five o’clock at Douglas; and he did preach at that hour to a house crowded to excess; and, as he himself says, “with great liberty,” and, from what followed, it is evident, with the greatest possible acceptance.

His improvement of time in the past is now to be repaid,—his study of the Scriptures, the sermons he had previously prepared. Sudden as was the announcement, it did not find him unprepared, the sermon that he preached on this occasion being the fifty-first of the collection. That the reader may form some idea how “sound in doctrine” he was at this time and how forcible was his enunciation or utterance of the truth, we give a short extract. The text was Romans viii. 32:—“He that spared not his own Son,

but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Under the head of the general declaration that God *spared* not his own Son, (did not keep him back, did not excuse him from suffering,*) he says, "He gave us his *best* gift. There is," he remarked, "no act of God's power but we may conceive a greater, but in this condescension. His own Son! Here is the emphasis: he was a divine person. If a creature, the apostle would have magnified the greatness of the purchase with the small price. He has no such other gift. Omnipotence is limited here; we can ask no blessing adequate to this. Hence, what is the pardon of sins to God? Nay, he delights in it. This does not now require any sacrifice on God's part. Why, then, should he withhold *inferior* blessings? We are warranted to ask till we think of some gift greater than Jesus. But he gave his Son that *he might give us pardon*, make us heirs, and give us the Holy Ghost. Now, shall he lay the foundation and go no further? Where would then be his consistency? How is he the same? How could he be said to be without shadow of turning?"†

We cannot well withhold the following additional extract from this his first sermon in Cork, that our readers may see the solidity of his thoughts and on what a broad substratum his eloquence was built. He further remarks,—

"Lastly: he will *freely* give us all things. No regard to merit or worthiness in the receiver. As he had no such regard when he gave his Son, so he yet acts freely; pardons, sanctifies, saves to heaven *freely*. When man sinned,

* Sermons, p. 322.

† Ibid. p. 323.

God asks not 'What does he *deserve*?' but 'What does he *need*?' A Divine Redeemer. Just so now; the question is the same:—'What do they need?'

"True, we should take our unworthiness into account, but God does not: that is not *his measure*.

"To ask any thing of our neighbor, we find he impoverishes himself more or less in serving us; we ought to remember that God has them for the *very purpose* of bestowing, and that *he is paid when man receives*. The feast is prepared; and, if not participated in by the guests invited, *he* is the party injured. All things are ready; the expense has been incurred. If we asked these things before Christ was given, there would be no room for hope; the expense of obtaining them would be too great. The sin of the world *now* is the not receiving 'the great salvation.' God has made a marriage for his Son, and them that are invited will not come."*

Thus began, this Sabbath evening, his ministry in Cork; the great theme of his preaching, as is most clear from the above brief extracts, salvation by grace through faith, and faith alone,—this written already on his divinely-illuminated heart as with the point of a diamond. The clearness with which the whole plan of salvation, in all its depth, freeness, and fulness, was presented to his mind, was amazing: the Holy Spirit, it would seem, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, bathed his whole soul with heavenly light as with one burst of his radiance; the great mystery of faith, as it were, at a glance, apprehended by him.

During the services of this to him so memorable evening,

* Sermons, p. 324.

his own frame of mind was in happy unison with the scene and services of the hour,—the following verses which formed part of the first hymn he gave out being happily expressive of his own joy, of the feelings of his own heart. We quote the first and second verses of this hymn of praise; his manner of reading a hymn, as all know who heard him, always unfolding beauties they never discovered before, so great his gift in this respect:—

“ Oh, what shall I do my Savior to praise,
So faithful and true, so plenteous in grace,
So strong to deliver, so good to redeem
The weakest believer that hangs upon him.

“ How happy the man whose heart is set free,—
The people that can be joyful in thee!
Their joy is to walk in the light of thy face,
And still they are talking of Jesus’s grace.”

On his return home that evening he made the following entry in his diary:—

“ Thus have I commenced on this (to me) MEMORABLE DAY. And now ‘I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath!’ My heart warms in the work, and I am determined to lay myself out for God.”

On the following Wednesday he preached again, and the effect of the first sermon was such that the place was crowded to excess. In reference to this occasion and to the worth of souls which God had laid so near his heart,—souls that must live in happiness or misery to all eternity,—souls that not believing in Christ must perish everlastingly,—he says, “O my God, did I *speak*, and did they *hear*, for *eternity*?”

He says of this second attempt, "I exerted too much, and preached near an hour, besides the singing and prayer. But who could forbear? If I injure my body I cannot restrain."

He saw souls standing on the verge of ruin; he heard in anticipation the wild shrieks of despair that *will* go up from the lost when it is too late, when the door shall be shut, when the harvest shall indeed have passed, when the summer shall have ended, and naught remains but a frowning judge, a burning hell, and an awful eternity.

The following brief extract from his sermon on "The Dignity and Office of the Christian Ministry," will enable us to judge somewhat of his conception of the danger of souls and of the way he was accustomed at this time and ever after to address the multitudes that assembled to hear the word of the Lord at his mouth. Thus he speaks:—

"O sinner, I can already behold the awful scene; I hear the archangel's voice:—'Arise, ye dead, and come.' Where? To *judgment!* See the bursting graves, the great white throne moved forward by ten thousand times ten thousand angels. See the books opened, the judgment set. Behold! the Judge himself appears, clothed with a garment down to the foot, his eyes as a flame of fire, his feet like unto fine brass, his countenance as the sun shining in his strength, his voice as the sound of many waters, yea, as mighty thundrings. I see the tomb casts thee forth,—refuses to hide thy sinful dust. Thine eyes open: thou wast not dead but sleeping; and now thou art awakened to sleep no more forever. I see thy vast surprise; I hear thy hollow groan, thy piercing cry; thou rendest heaven with thy shrieks. 'Is that the babe of Bethlehem? Lord, Lord, open unto us.'

Thou art called to the bar; thy crimes are read: plead *now* his blood. Thou pleadest 'Jesus:' he says, '*I am he;*' but thou drawest backward and fallest,—down to hell. Thy mouth is stopped; his blood cries against thee; thou trampledst it beneath thy feet. In time thou wast heard exclaiming, 'His blood be on me!' and now the Judge says, 'My blood be on thee forever,—ever!' See, sinner, devils wait to drag thy soul away. This *will be* thy case; hazard not the experiment; be wise in time; flee from thy sins; cut off, pluck out, tear the idol from thy breast, even though it should leave a bleeding heart behind; confess thy sins, and return unto the Lord."*

* Sermons, p. 26.

CHAPTER VII.

LABORS IN AND AROUND CORK AND THE ADJACENT COUNTRY.

WITH the rising sun Memnon had spoken. A new voice, even as the voice of an oracle, had been heard, and loud and far went forth the sweet and sadly-solemn sound.

When first was seen that all but angel face, when first was heard that voice which was as the carol of a lark as with the early morning it ascends in its swift and joyous flight to meet the sun, the charm was then, as ever afterward, all but irresistible. It was *in its measure* a little like the voice of the angel and the music of the skies, when first on the ears of the shepherds fell the heavenly announcement of Bethlehem's babe; there was to the mind that sense of the reality of the invisible world which such a communication could not fail to produce. So, when at the first this youthful herald of the Cross spoke, it was as if a *voice* from heaven had been heard; such was the heavenly influence that attended his words. He appeared, like Jacob's ladder, as a channel of communication, a medium of intercourse, between heaven and earth; and man felt in a new, unknown way that the ethereal spark within him was kindred to that of the skies, and that heaven and hell were not vague, floating, impalpable substances, but actual, all-enduring realities. As you listened earth receded;

and, as a vessel receding every instant farther and farther from the shore, at length the last line vanished, and naught was before you but eternity's wide, unbounded expanse.

Having preached, as we have seen, Sunday evening, at the close of setting day, at Douglas, a village a short distance from the city, and then on Wednesday evening at Blackpool, each time producing the most profound impression, every heart vibrating to the golden chord he struck, beating responsively to the magic touch, it is pleasing to follow him to his retirement; his time employed, as he says, during the remainder of the week, in "mending his net," preparing for future labors; and also, as he adds, "in imploring the aid of Him who alone can direct me how to let down the net on the right side of the ship."

From this time we are told by his biographer that "he was engaged almost incessantly at one place or another . . . for one or other of the Methodist ministers;"* while the desire of the people to hear him was such that it appeared impossible to satisfy them. We may judge of this eagerness from an expression of one of the ministers when writing to him, (Rev. S. Steel, of Roscrea,) who said, "There are many of the Methodists who in their godly zeal would encourage you to preach until you would drop down dead." As to himself, when, to use his own words, "his soul was sharpened" by the presence of his Master, he knew not how to restrain himself.

Writing to his sister as to this, after he had been preach-

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 116; also p. 107.

ing some six months, he says, (speaking of an occasion when he was very ill and yet preached,) "I know you will blame me; but oh, my dear Ellen, could you but enter into the feelings of a minister of the gospel, you would at least *pity*, if not *forgive*! The love of Christ constrains us."*

His biographer thus speaks of the impression he produced in Cork and its vicinity when first he appeared, bursting as the sun from behind a cloud upon them:—

"So interesting was the appearance and so fascinating the eloquence of this young evangelist, that many persons who had never heard a Methodist preacher, and probably would not have been prevailed on to hear any other, attended the preaching of Mr. Summerfield in the neighborhood of Cork. Whether, however, these were Churchmen or Catholics, persons bigoted against Methodism or mere men of the world, all were delighted and edified by the fervor and simplicity of his sermons."†

During the months of August and September his labors were chiefly confined to Cork and its immediate vicinity; but not without some drawback on his own part and some opposition from without.

As to himself, he did not always preach with the same freedom and effect. On several occasions we read of his being greatly embarrassed. The following entry will show how he was affected at one time:—

"If ever the enemy was permitted to buffet me, surely this was the time." (He had been preaching in Patrick Street Chapel.) "I had my thoughts taken from me, and

* New Edit. of Life, p. 105.

† Large Edit. of Life, p. 120.

in this state I began to roam I knew not where. I would have given all the world to have been out of the house; and, after I had concluded, I remained till all the people had retired, that I might escape home unperceived. My God, is this from thee? O my Father, send by whom thou wilt send, but not by me! I cannot, cannot preach. Perhaps God has withdrawn his light from me. I know I might have been more faithful; but, O my God, yet bear with me! I did dedicate myself to thee; but, if thou hast naught for me to do, remove me out of this world altogether. I only wish to live to promote thy cause.”*

He suffered also from slanderous reports. He was once so influenced by these that he gave up an appointment to preach at Douglas one Sabbath in August; as he says, like Jonah, fleeing from the Lord’s work,—going to the Cove on Saturday and spending the Sabbath there.

At another time, referring to these reports, he says, “May I never forget the caution which a false accusation from the Clon’s party has given me! Oh, how happy should we be when we hear our faults from our enemies! our friends seldom tell them to us; too seldom.”

By way of a little explanation of these reports, we would say, to use Mr. Summerfield’s own language, that at this time “the Methodist society in Ireland was rent in twain from top to bottom;” the Irish Methodist Conference having, after several years’ discussion and agitation of the subject, resolved that the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper should be administered by its own ministers. The decision

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 118.

gave great offence to many of the leading and most influential members in the society: especially was the opposition to the measure very strong in Dublin. The issue was a great division, which extended from one end of the land to the other; the Clonite party, as it was called, arraying itself in opposition to the Conference.*

The popularity of Mr. Summerfield, operating as it did in the highest degree favorably for the Conference, exposed him to the violent invectives of the opposite party, (their opposition to him being so strong that they regarded his first serious illness as the judgment of God,) and led to the "slandrous reports" to which allusion has been made; and we refer to them now that they may be traced to their true cause,—the violence of religious faction.

But these drawbacks, whether as they related to himself or others, were very temporary in their character: the missiles of the new party fell harmless at his feet; and, as to his public ministrations, they were greatly owned of God. One who knew him well, and whose acquaintance with him commenced now, thus speaks of his success in saving souls; the language of Mr. Summerfield being always thus:—"Give me souls, or I die."

The lady to whom we refer thus speaks:—

"In 'doing the work of an evangelist, and making full proof of his ministry,' it was made manifest unto all that

* In Matthew Lanktree's narrative a full account of the circumstances connected with this separation will be found detailed with no ordinary degree of candor and impartiality. The difficulty with many originated in the strong attachment they entertained for the Established Church, and the additional breach—already, as they thought, sufficiently wide—that would be made between it and the Society should their own ministers administer the sacrament.

his sufficiency was of God, who had made him an able minister of the New Testament, and by whose all-inspiring Spirit the 'letters of his commendation' were written and sealed upon many, many hearts."*

Amid his great popularity, amid the unbounded love and affection which were shown him, amid good report and evil report, but one thought absorbed his own mind:—the salvation of souls. The following extract from his sermon on "Apostolic Preaching" will assist somewhat to show this. It is true he is speaking in the first paragraph of the *end* of all Paul's works; but here, as in a mirror, he shows us himself,—the panting of his own soul, the inextinguishable desires of his own breast. The extract is as follows:—

"His end was the salvation of immortal souls; an *end* worthy of Saul of Tarsus, worthy of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. His mighty soul could grasp no less an object. It is the end which God proposes to himself, the end he had in view in the gift of his only Son, the end of all his dispensations to the sons of men. This alone is an object worthy of a creature made for God; it is the true dignity of human nature."

He then applies the remark to himself, to his own ministry, the end and aim thereof:—

"And shall a less design satisfy *me*? Shall *my* soul, born for glory, whose naked birthright is immortality, take up with a lower theme? Shall any other pursuit

* Mrs. Creah, mother of the late Rev. Bartholomew Creah, of the New York Conference, whose house in Fermoy, Ireland, was one of Mr. Summerfield's early and happy homes.

occupy *my* mind than what occupies the mind of my God? Shall I propose a less object than *angels* choose? There is joy among them over one sinner that repenteth; and shall I feel less? No."*

Radiating from Cork as from a common centre, he soon extended his labors south and north, east and west: to Bandon and Ross on the south, Waterford on the east, Tralee on the west, and to Cashel (the name of Cashel—like that of Petra of Edom, or Idumea—derived from its foundation on a rock) and Roscrea and Mountrath on the north,—Mountrath only forty miles or so (Irish) from Dublin. His name soon becoming known, and the Spirit being poured forth in every section through which he travelled,† led to these numerous and urgent calls, superinducing from the first moment a degree of bodily exertion and mental labor and solicitude wholly beyond his strength.

When, also, besides the power that attended his ministry, it was found, to use the language of a cotemporary, that "his sweet, persuasive tongue, recommending brotherly-kindness and charity, carried all away to spiritual union and heavenly peace, and that he was made so general a blessing in that time of strife and division in the church, entreating his brethren, even weeping, not to fall out by the way," this also had its effect in multiplying his engagements and greatly increasing his labors. He says of himself he thinks he was of use, "*forced* out as he was in those times, in sewing up the rents that had been made." A

* Sermons, pp. 359, 360.

† See reference to this in his missionary sermon, p. 163 of his printed discourses.

modest representation this; his biographer informing us that "it was the opinion of a large proportion of the society in Ireland that he was raised up by God especially at this juncture to counteract the mischievous consequences of such a division."*

It was an extraordinary crisis in the history of Methodism in Ireland when he commenced his labors. At the close of the last and the beginning of this century the Methodist society had been greatly scattered and divided by the rebellion,—some circuits, such as Carlow and Wicklow, almost broken up; but they were united among themselves.† Now those whose fellowship formerly had been so sweet, like beasts of prey were rending each other; not bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the law of God, but biting and devouring one another. All was commotion and discord; intestine religious war raged throughout all the borders of the church; the waves ran high; the enemies of Christ rejoiced, and all his true followers were clad as in sackcloth,—“their face foul with weeping, and on their eyelids the shadow of death.”‡

But through the storm and on the wave, walking as an angel of light, came this messenger of peace; his labors everywhere greatly tending to heal the breaches that had been made, and to build up once again the walls that had fallen down.

It is not necessary here, neither have we room, to follow Mr. Summerfield in detail from place to place. A few items will suffice.

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 112.

† See Lanktree's Narrative, p. 81.

‡ Job xvi. 16.

In the beginning of October he visited Fermoy, a little to the north of Cork, seated on the Blackwater River; the plain washed by this river called of old, in sweet old Irish, "the sacred plain, or plain of the learned." Here he preached in the court-house "to the largest congregations ever seen in that place." His biographer tells us when he reached this place "he represents his soul as having been in the happiest frame he almost ever remembers."

It was at Fermoy at that time resided Mrs. Creah, whose house, as was said,* was one of Mr. Summerfield's homes. Mrs. Creah thus speaks of his solicitude for the success of the word, and of the great weight and burden he felt for the salvation of immortal souls for whom Christ died; she a witness to some extent of his intense and inexpressible solicitude in his more secret hours, while in *public* he addressed such immense congregations from night to night. She thus speaks:—

"His entrance upon the work of the ministry was not to him 'a cause of small import.' This, not only the expression of his lips, but the struggles of his heart, amply testified. Frequently have I been pained in witnessing those unutterable emotions within him which seemed to say, in language which none but an ambassador of Christ can fully understand, "Who is sufficient for these things?"†

In his progress we next find him at Clonmel, on his way to Waterford; Clonmel the birthplace of one who had a very different view of his vocation as a minister of the

* See *Note*, p. 58.

† New Edit. of *Life*, p. 297.

gospel from Mr. Summerfield.* From Clonmel he went to Waterford, with its white houses, smiling lawns, and fine quay, situated on the broad and rapid river Suir, not far from the sea.

At Waterford, or, rather, on the Waterford circuit, was stationed the Rev. William Stewart, who received him as a brother beloved; one, too, whom Mr. Summerfield ever tenderly loved. Speaking of him, he says, "He is an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile."

Mr. Stewart thus speaks of the preaching of Mr. Summerfield in Waterford at this time. He says, "We were delighted with him in Waterford. He preached for us several times; and his sermons discovered a depth and extent of Scripture knowledge and Christian experience much beyond his years. This, together with his manner, style of delivery, and very youthful appearance, attracted great congregations, who all seemed edified and impressed, and retired, wondering at the grace of God manifested in his person, his preaching, and his prayers; readily re-echoing

* We refer to the Rev. Lawrence Sterne. The following account of an extraordinary and wonderful effusion of the Holy Spirit at Clonmel, in the year 1802, we take from Lanktree's Narrative. It is of so marked a character that we extract it:—"April 19, 1802.—Mr. Smith" (his colleague on Waterford circuit) "wrote to me from Clonmel as follows:—'My dearly beloved brother, though it is now past eleven o'clock, I cannot sleep till I inform you that I preached a farewell sermon to my precious soldiers to-night from John i. 6. A gracious time! Afterward the whole society drank tea in the school-room. We turned it into a love-feast. But tongue cannot tell or pen write a description of the overwhelming power of saving grace which fell on the people. The oldest Methodist present never remembered such a time; and I am sure I never saw any thing equal to it, nor ever expect to see such a night till I stand before the throne. It will surely never be forgotten in Clonmel.'"—*Narrative*, p. 114.

the common sentiment respecting him:—"He is a prodigy!"

His popularity at Waterford was such, says his biographer, that, "besides the crowds of ordinary hearers, many persons of rank and influence went to hear him." The Rev. Mr. Fleury, son of the Archdeacon of Waterford, sat in the pulpit with him; a happy change here, for in former times the archdeacon was an antagonist of Mr. Wesley; but years before his prejudices had been weakened if not removed, and the son seems to have imbibed the catholic spirit of the father.*

Ranging from place to place, travelling on horseback, preaching every day, he went as near Dublin as Mountrath. He labored, also,—“great grace resting on him from day to day,”—at Cashel and Roscrea, and also at Birr, or, rather, Parson’s-town, where, in the course of the next year, we find him receiving marked attention from the Earl of Rosse,—all ranks attracted by his oratory; but not by that alone:—by the great power of God that attended his preaching.

Amid the blaze of Mr. Summerfield’s popularity we must not lose sight of this. He was as faithful to the rich and great as to the poor: he did not mince the truth; he did not spare the rich or great; their presence did not lead him to lose sight of their souls or of his own awful responsibility.

* The following notice of the Archdeacon of Waterford will be interesting in this connection:—"Archdeacon Fleury, Mr. Wesley's former antagonist, was now friendly, and we generally attended service in his church. He called to see me in my illness, invited me to the use of his library, and told me he was the tenth clergyman in lineal descent from his ancestors."—*Lanktree's Narrative for the year 1802.*

We will get some little insight into the *man*—how like sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal the favor of the great or popular applause was to him, disconnected from the favor of God and the salvation of souls—from the following extracts. They are taken from his sermon entitled “The Minister’s Request:”—

“And what will you ask of God for us? Is it that we may be popular and be able to please the world? No. Whatever others do, I would entreat of you to ask *that* of God for which I myself have supplicated the throne, with many prayers and tears, night and day. ‘And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou mayest give him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment: behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and

an understanding heart.' Pray that your ministers may have this wisdom, this soundness of mind, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."

Then, again, he adds,—

"Pray that no entanglement of the fear of man may cleave to the discourses of your ministers, but that they may speak boldly as they ought to speak, that an effectual door of utterance may be opened, and that with the meekness of the Lamb of God they may connect the force of the Lion of the tribe of Judah; that their faces may be set as *brass* against the enemies of the Lord; that it may be said of them, as of their Master, they are no respecter of persons nor care for the person of any man."*

Raised above every undue influence was he by the great *end* of his ministry, which he ever kept steadily in view. Of this he thus speaks:—

"What is the end we have in view? If we attain the graces mentioned, if the door of utterance be opened, does the matter rest here? Nay; but that the word of the Lord may be glorified or God glorified in and by his word. He is glorified when all his attributes are set forth as harmonizing in the economy of man's salvation,—the everlasting gospel. He is glorified in the change made in the hearts and lives of multitudes of sinners: 'a new song is put into their mouth, *even praise to God.*' He is glorified in saving millions of souls from everlasting burnings; and these ransomed ones shall swell his glories in the world to

* Sermons:—"The Minister's Request," p. 173.

come. Pray that our crowns of glory may be worth casting at the feet of Jesus.”*

Could one who felt and spoke thus cater for the smiles of men? Could he stop to please the rich or flatter the great when he saw them every instant in danger of dropping into hell if unsaved, unwashed, in a state of wrath and condemnation? No. He spoke to all alike as one that must give account; resolved, fully purposed in his own heart, to clear his skirts and to be pure from the blood of all men. Thus, on this head, he speaks:—

“But if, after all, no man should stand by us, the Lord will help us himself. We shall yet be ‘unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved and also in them that perish; to the one a savor of life unto life, and to the other a savor of death unto death.’ God will be glorified by us in one way or other. If we are doomed to say, ‘All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people,’ yet our labor is with the righteous Judge.”†

Thus for several months, from October till near the close of the year, he continued to preach, going from place to place, as we have seen, first in one direction, then in another, as he was called and duty seemed to require or the way to open. Once within that time he returned as near to Cork as the Cove, but he did not visit the city: this was to preach there, on the 8th of November, his first missionary sermon, to which allusion has been already made. Instead of coming to Cork, obedient to the call of duty, (he had learned the great lesson no longer to “please

Sermons:—“The Minister’s Request,” p. 175.

† Ibid.

himself,") he proceeded to Waterford to preach on the following Sunday for the same purpose.*

At length, having described quite a large circle round Cork, though preaching mostly to the north and east of the city, approaching Dublin toward the north and the sea on the east, preaching, in addition to the places we have mentioned, in Thurles and Templemore, in the county of Tipperary, placed quite near each other, as also in Shinrone in the county of Waterford, and Piltown farther north, and, as we suppose, at other places, he at length returned to Cork, "arriving at his father's house once more on the 23d day of December, having travelled more than three hundred miles and preached on an average seven times a week since he left home."†

He arrived in time to attend watch-night in Cork. The year before, on this selfsame night, he watched the old year out and the new year in in Dublin. Then he was unknown, having as yet never even prayed in public: now his name is on every tongue; he is the object of deepest interest to thousands; in this season of discord he is received everywhere as a messenger of peace; but yesterday poor, he is now rich,—not indeed in silver and gold, but in the affections of those whose hearts God had graciously touched by the dispensation of the word by his servant. He had also been the herald of mercy and the messenger of *peace* to many souls.

Having returned home on the last day of the (to him)

* Of his first missionary sermon we have this record:—"He undertook the duty with fear and trembling; but God aided him, and the collection was larger than on any previous occasion."—*Large Edit. of Life*, p. 124.

† *Large Edit. of Life*, p. 126.

ever-memorable year of 1818, he made the following entry in his diary:—

“This is the last day of the old year. Oh, what shall I say to my God for all his goodness to me in the past year? I am at a loss for expression. My heart is too full. In this *one year* I have first prayed in public and begun to preach, and preached in the metropolis of Ireland in our largest chapel and at the most public time. O my God, may I grow up into thee more and more in all my ways! may I be spent for thee, who didst spend thyself for me! may I glorify thee continually!”*

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 126.

CHAPTER VIII.

PREACHES IN DUBLIN.

SHORT time did he stay in Cork, at his father's house, during this visit; not above a week.

He had invitations to preach from every quarter; all urgent, all anxious to have his services, and saying, in the language of the man who appeared to Paul in a vision in the night at Troas, "Come over into Macedonia and help us."*

Mrs. Creah thus speaks of these invitations while he was at her house at Fermoy:—"So numerous and pressing," she says, "were the invitations from all quarters, that my fears were soon excited lest his feeble tenement should early fall beneath the weight of his abundant labors; for, while the listening multitudes were charmed and transported with the exhibition and development of such extraordinary powers, they apparently forgot that the treasure was deposited in an 'earthen vessel,'—that so rich and rare a jewel was encased in so frail a casket."†

Among other places that put in a claim for his services was Dublin; and it would seem he had made an engagement to preach in that city the first Sabbath of the new year.

* Acts xvi. 9.

† New Edit. of Life, p. 298.

In the controversy that had arisen in the Methodist society in Ireland in respect to the administration of the Lord's Supper, and which was now scattering its seeds of death in every direction through the length and breadth of the land, most of the leaders and trustees in Dublin, the men of wealth and influence, were opposed to the innovation, as they regarded it. They thought it highly desirable that the union between the Methodists and the Established Church should be kept up, and that the Methodist ministers should not preach in church hours or administer the sacrament. In the year 1815, (the Conference sitting in Dublin,) while the subject was under discussion, the Dublin leaders presented a strong remonstrance against any change in what was called "church order;"* and when in 1816 the Conference decided adverse to them, it resulted in the loss of full one-third of the whole society in Dublin. On one Sabbath morning, just before the meeting of the classes, sixteen of the principal class-leaders, owing to this unhappy cause, were read out of the society; and, being present at the time, walked straightway out of the chapel as their names were read, followed, in some cases, by more or less of those who belonged to their several classes.

Serious, yea, disastrous, was the rent that was thus made; and, as the popularity of Mr. Summerfield had been found

* We have the following account of this in Lanktree's Narrative:—"The most formidable array of opposition was the presentation of the great 'Remonstrance' from the Dublin leaders. This was engrossed on a vast roll of parchment, and brought into Conference by my venerable old friend, Arthur Keene, Esq., attended by a deputation of several of the most respectable official characters belonging to our society in Dublin. The Conference received them standing, and the scene was deeply impressive."—p. 244.

so efficacious in "sewing up the rents," the society in Dublin were anxious to avail themselves of his invaluable services. Thus it was in the beginning of the year 1819 he appeared in Dublin.

There were many things to make this visit to Dublin one of peculiar interest to Mr. Summerfield. He was about to revisit a city where, until within a very recent period, he had lived in sin and folly, in the known and open transgression of the laws of God, disobedient, perverse, unthankful. A year or two before his death, when in England, writing to his father, he thus speaks of his painful recollection of the past, of these days of forgetfulness of God and riotous excess:—"You know," he says, "my dear father, and I know, and God knows also, and I blush even now while I write it, that much of my life has run to waste. In the former part of it *I lived to myself*, and not to Him who loved me and gave himself for me. I will not, I *cannot*, forgive myself; *no, never*."

Here, also, he first tasted the sweets of redeeming grace and dying love; here he lisped his first accents of love to his great Redeemer, his Savior, his "Almighty Friend;" here he first opened the great commission wherewith he had been intrusted by God to preach the gospel.

The following extract from his sermon on "The Dignity and Office of the Christian Ministry" will show the sense he had of his call to the great work,—"*the awful, the arduous work*," as he terms it; he an apostle not of men, neither by the will of man, but of God the Father, and Jesus Christ whom he raised from the dead:—

"The ambassador of God is God's immediate minister; from *him* he derives his commission, and *his* credentials he

must produce. The outward separation to the ministry by ordination is but *man's* work, and supposes the previous appointment of God. Oh, how solemn the declaration, 'I am inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take this office and ministry'! The call, then, is of God; and, without such a call, man's appointment is of no efficacy. It was an evil day for the church when any others were appointed to the ministry than such as were thus moved. Human learning is useful to the Christian minister: it facilitates his ministry, and should be attended to; but it is not absolutely indispensable. I do not condemn it; but I condemn its being substituted for *divine* knowledge, and made the *only* qualification for admission to the most sacred office. They are not the credentials of human literature which he is to display, but rather the seal of the Holy Ghost,—his commission from God. The Holy Ghost must inwardly move him to that great work; and any minister who has not this broad seal of heaven upon his credentials is a hypocrite; he shall have his *reward here*, but the *punishment* hereafter."*

With his commission sounding in his ears, with the voice of the Master behind him and the print of his footsteps in front, after an absence short if it be measured by time, but *long* if measured by events, by what had been done within that time, he appears in Dublin, prepared to speak all the words of this life.

A solemn thought arises in our mind in connection with Mr. Summerfield's preaching at this time in Whitefriar Street Chapel, Dublin. It was just a year since, in this

* Sermons, p. 23.

very chapel, while the society as a body renewed their covenant with God, he on his part at the same time renewed his with the Lord. Of the peculiar character of this covenant we may form some idea from the following extract:—In a letter to his sister, speaking of the state of his mind under conviction, and showing how deeply he felt it was the Spirit of God then working powerfully within his soul, he says, “‘I vowed a vow unto the Lord;’ he knows the nature of it, he received it, I was restored to health, and by the strength of the Lord I am performing it.” He then adds, “I began to seek Him whom I had before despised; the world was stripped of its charms; I saw with new eyes; Jesus was the only amiable object, while I loathed myself in dust and ashes ‘that I so late to him did turn.’”*

That same night, we recollect, he wrote in his diary as follows:—“On my way home I was musing on what I had done; saw that I had *married* myself to Christ, to take him for better for worse, through honor and dishonor.”

His early vow, his solemn covenant, rise before our mind as we see him occupying, after the lapse of but one short year, under such changed circumstances, the pulpit in Whitefriar Street Chapel; and we seem to ourselves to see one who, bidding farewell to all the world holds dear, and rending every tie, even the nearest and the most sacred, consecrates himself without reserve to the love and service of Jesus Christ. Jesus is to him “his beloved, the chiefest among ten thousand.”† It is this peculiar dedication of himself to God which rises in solemn review before

* New Edit. of Life, p. 89.

† Canticles v. 10.

us in connection with his preaching in Dublin at this time.*

The love which he feels to Jesus, his service, his people, his cause, is unbounded. There is not an object, not a thought in his breast, to divide him from his God, to interpose the slightest barrier to screen the object of his love from his gaze. All his affections, hopes, desires, are centred in Christ; not only now in his early love, but by a solemn vow, they belong wholly to Christ forever.

“Henceforth shall no *allowed* delight
Divide this consecrated soul;
Possess it thou who hast the right,
As Lord and Master of the *whole*.”

It was, as we are willing to conceive, under the impression of this entire self-consecration to God,—body, soul, all his powers, all he possessed and all he hoped for,—the covenant into which he had entered brought forcibly to his mind by present surrounding associations,—that he now rose up to speak; he the bride of heaven, the spouse of Christ; henceforth, through every changing scene and stage of life,—

“His only business here below,
To cry, Behold the Lamb!”

His fame had preceded him. An immense congregation was assembled,—some two thousand five hundred people, (filling not only the chapel but the space around, and so through the archway to the street,) in a state of great expectation; but perhaps the half had not been told them.

* We are not in this painting a picture, but describing a *fact*.

We have in the fabled charm of Orpheus's lyre the effects produced by sweet sounds—and especially when these sounds are divine—upon both man and beast. Ears that no other sounds could reach felt the power of celestial harmony when struck by such a hand as Orpheus, son of Apollo; and, as if to show the power of this divine minstrelsy, we are told that not only ferocious beasts, wild, savage, thirsting for blood, forgot for a time their fierce instincts, but rocks melted under the sound, and the trees of the forest waved responsive to the harmony. Such, in a measure, was the charm that came over the assembled multitude when first, under fair auspices, was heard in Dublin this new voice; the voice of one who, like Orpheus, spoke and sang "like a being sent from heaven." But no fabled charm was this; here was a divine reality, an utterance surpassingly sweet, but that utterance truly of God.

We have read in ancient story, or, rather, among ancient myths, of Psyche, so ethereal in appearance as scarcely to seem of earth, with light extended wing ever ready to soar away, leaving the cumbrous clay behind. So in truth might it be said of him who now stood up to speak all the words of this life, that he hardly seemed of the earth, earthy; the serenity of his face as the serenity of heaven, and a smile so sweet, yet sad, it might be taken for the smile of an angel sojourning on earth, illumining it with his presence, but mournfully pining for his return to his native skies.

As if God in this instance meant that the casket that contained a jewel so rare, so precious, should correspond to what was enshrined in it, hardly could gossamer texture be more finely spun than the delicate frame of this chosen one

of God; chosen to charm away from earth earthly ears by words all divine. It did seem as if any wind might blow it away, or as if, like the form of an angel, it might at any moment melt away into thin air.

Here, too, were all the graces of the Holy Spirit appearing in one, sublimated by the love of God in Christ Jesus. It was as if Jesus had anew spoken the word, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," and forthwith there should arise, as of old, from the virgin dust when first the mighty *fiat* was spoken, the new man in Christ Jesus. Now was seen the gentleness of Jesus, the love of Jesus, the sweet spirit of Jesus,—love, as a golden thread, running through every word, thought, and action.

It must be admitted that the harmony was perfect: the man, the saint, the Christian minister, all happily united; love in the soul, the spirit of Christ exemplified in the life, fidelity in the pulpit; and then, as if to complete the portraiture and if possible to steal the hearts of men away from earth, with "grace poured into those lips,"—lips that the bee might sip, nectar and honey flowing therefrom.

How awful, how vast, how deep, were the truths he enunciated! The beauty and fragility of Psyche were associated with the hopes of immortality, as, under a heathen garb, they dimly pierced beneath the veil of earth and time; but the mixture of truth with fable was so strongly marked, that the soul would doubt even while it longed to believe, and, believing, to soar away to a better state, a brighter clime; but in this case here was one, as if truly from the skies, bringing with him the message of life and immortality, bidding doubt and darkness begone,

unveiling, as if before your very eyes, the hidden mystery of a future existence; bringing no Eurydice, as Orpheus did partly, from the invisible world, to be lost again, (such the unearthly charm of his lyre,) but putting on death, on dust, and on the grave, the stamp of immortality itself.

But, most glorious of all, he preached Jesus and the resurrection. He had felt the power of his resurrection in his own soul, quickening him from a death of sin to a life of righteousness, raising dead souls to sit with him in heavenly places even here; and he set before the eyes of the listening thousands whom he charmed,—

“The precious, bleeding sacrifice.”

“We preach,” he said, “Christ crucified in all his glorious characters,—Prophet, Priest, and King,—and yet God in every one,—the equal of the Father, in whom alone is salvation. We preach *Jesus, Jesus, Jesus*. Oh, the thrilling sound!—

“‘It charms the hosts above.’”*

Again he speaks:—

“Were not his blood meritorious, these things might in Scripture have been attributed to the birth, example, &c. of Christ. But no: all is attributed to his blood, and that *meritorious*:—‘made nigh by *blood*’; ‘opened the holiest by *blood*.’ The agonizing conscience can only go to Calvary’s wounded tree, which bleeds the balm he wants:—‘redemption in his *blood*.’ Are we unclean? Only one

* Sermons:—“Apostolical Preaching,” p. 360.

specific:—‘the fountain opened;’ ‘the *blood* of Christ cleanseth from all sin.’ Have we an enemy? The road to victory over death gained by the *blood* of the Lamb; for by his dying he conquered death. Is paradise to be obtained? Only one way: they all cry, ‘To him that washed and redeemed us by his own blood;’ all, all given to the *precious blood*.’’*

The effect of Summerfield’s preaching on this day in Dublin was great. It is not too much to say that the whole city lay at his feet, surrendering itself a willing captive to his eloquence. To men of the world, to the gay, the volatile, to many in fashion’s giddy throng, the word came with power,—the word of *faith* that he preached. They felt that existence was a reality not to be frittered away in an endless, unmeaning round of gay amusements, but to be improved for eternity. For a while at least earth receded. The most profound attention was given to words which partook as nearly of direct inspiration as it is possible for us to conceive. One who was then a resident in Dublin, and who was one of his constant hearers in this the first flush of his life’s short day, could never weary in after-years of speaking of the effect of his words, the admiration that was excited, and, what was more, of the heavenly impressions produced. To the mind of this person, when in after-years speaking of him after his unconscious form had been long sleeping in the silent dust, it seemed rather as if she were recalling the vision of an angel than one of mortal mould, so little seemed there of earth in him, and his stay here like that of an angel’s visit, so short,—the

* Sermons, p. 403.

flitting of a gleam of pure celestial light athwart the gloom of earth's night.*

The trial has passed; the vast congregation retires spell-bound. Cork, the second city, the country around, had felt and acknowledged the nameless charm; and now Dublin, the capital, joins the general acclaim.

* Mrs. — or —.

CHAPTER IX.

HIS SECOND ITINERATING TOUR.

THE healing influence of his words, his sweet, persuasive voice, recommending so effectually, as we have already seen, (as acknowledged by those who were eye-witnesses of the happy effect of his labors,) “‘brotherly-kindness and charity,’ entreating his brethren, even weeping, to ‘fall not out by the way,’” was manifest in Dublin as well as elsewhere. But he was not without his trials from this source; once in particular, he was called to preach in Dublin under such trying circumstances that his knees smote against each other as he ascended the pulpit stairs; but he cast his burden on the Lord, and he sustained him.

A nice point in the controversy that rent the Methodist society asunder in Ireland was the nature of what was called “chapel trusts;” whether the decision of Conference as it respects the administration of the Lord’s Supper and preaching in church hours would not so invalidate these trusts that the chapels would be held by the New Connection. Dr. Adam Clarke, who was President of the Irish Conference at the time the matter came up for final decision, from the first gave it as his opinion that the Conference would hold them, and this in opposition to the

attorney-general; and the legal result showed that the doctor was right.*

In the course of the year 1817-18 this matter was argued in the courts of Dublin; Mr. Summerfield, as his biographer has informed us,† attending the courts during the trial, and, no doubt, then conclusively forming his own opinion as to the merits of the case. Shortly after this, as he became known, he was solicited, yea, strongly urged, to take sides with the new party; but he remained firm in his convictions, giving to the Conference the weight of his great popularity.

In addition, then, to the feeling that existed toward him in Dublin at this time from his talents and piety, there was superadded the healing influence of his presence and words; he thereby an instrument in the hand of God in calming the agitation that prevailed, repairing breaches, and softening the asperity of religious faction.

Great was the love shown him in Dublin,—even as in Cork and elsewhere. He was almost devoured with love, swallowed up with overmuch affection. The “hundred thousand welcomes”‡ of the Irish heart were his,

* The reader may be pleased to see in this connection the doctor's opinion:—
“If in the examination of your deeds you find that neither preaching in church hours, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, &c. are proscribed, and that there are no conditions *specified* relative to such uses of the chapels, then no trustee can legally shut them up. A trustee can only plead *on a breach of trust*; and he, as guardian, may interfere to prevent the premises from being *alienated* from their original purpose. Saurin, (the attorney-general,) therefore, is not right. It is the trust clause alone that determines concerning the use of the chapels.”—*Lanktree's Narrative*, p. 261.

† Large Edit. of Life, p. 113.

‡ “Cead mille fealte.”

and this to such an extent that at times it was a matter of grief and pain to his mind.

When in Cork this took such a form that he thus speaks of it:—"My God," he says, "keep me very, very humble! I told them that I feared they would ruin me by making me think of myself above measure, and begged, if they loved me, they would desist."* And now in Dublin, amid the same expressions of unbounded love and regard, he tells us he had a dream, the purport whereof was to this effect:—"Be not high-minded, but fear."

He soon, however, tore himself from the fond embrace of anxious, loving friends. Relinquishing all the social comforts and endearments of the city, he mounted his horse once more, and, in the heart of winter, through storm and cold, in weariness and painfulness, went from place to place, from one circuit to another, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and binding up the wounds of bleeding Zion,—Zion wounded by her chief friends. For the next seven weeks he was thus engaged, preaching in that time some fifty sermons, from seven to ten a week, and travelling over three hundred miles, reaching his father's house in Cork once more on the 27th of February; already his feeble frame giving significant token of its inability to sustain such incessant labors, accompanied with such deep concern and travail for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. These few short words, sounding now as a knell in our ears, appear in his diary, written toward the close of this winter tour:—"My bodily frame is quite decayed;" such quick havoc did he make with his feeble frame.

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 114.

His exertions were indeed great during these few weeks. On he went, swiftly, untiringly, from place to place, as a flaming light, paying no regard whatever to himself, his body literally "a whole burnt-offering." On one occasion we are told of his speaking three hours, till his voice was drowned by the cries and tears of mourning souls; at another of his speaking two hours, till his voice was so exhausted he could speak no more. Such was the power of the word, that, to use his own expression, "shaking and trembling seized the sinner;" and the cry was, as of old, under the pungency of conviction for sin, of deep and overwhelming distress, of alarm at the fearful impending judgments of the Almighty:—"Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?"

It was during this tour his birthday arrived: he attaining his twenty-second year on the 31st of January, 1819. On this day he made a pause; at least, a partial pause. He sat himself down in his silent chamber to review the dealings of God with him for the past year, and the following is the record thereof. It is too interesting and valuable to withhold from the reader. Here it is:—

"This is my birthday. Oh, what matter have I for shame and confusion of face! When I look back on myself, I see great cause for self-abasement; I see that ever since I began to preach, my time has not been improved; occupied in visiting (the destruction of some of our young preachers whom I could name) and travelling from place to place; mixing necessarily with various companies of people, and not being guarded against that levity which creeps inadvertently upon me,—all these combined have produced a dislike to closet duties, meditation of the word, and prayer.

Though I feel with shame my shortcomings, yet I am thankful that God has not given me over to hardness of heart; my conscience is not yet seared as with a hot iron. I find that, if I look for and expect my God to own my labors, I must live a life different from most of our preachers, for whom my heart melts. O Zion! O Heaven! Thy cause! thy cause! thy great concern! And yet how little it seems to occupy their attention! With regard to many of them, it seems to have become a *trade*,—a mere form. My young heart has been led astray. I thought to have found among them self-denial, gravity, piety; but, ah, where is fled the spirit of my Master? If I expect God to bless others under my ministry of the word, I find I must not be conformed to them; I find it necessary to swim against the stream. Too many of them preach what they never practise. O my Father, enable me from this day to dedicate myself afresh to thee!—

‘Here’s my body, spirit, soul;
Only thou possess the whole.’

For the regulation of my future conduct, the following is the plan I lay down, which I intend by God’s grace to put in practice: I will first try it for a day; if my God enable me to keep it a *day*, he will for a *week*; if for a week, a *month*,—yea, *continually*:—

“*Time*.—As I find a natural sloth attaches itself to all my powers, which is, I believe, common to all men, I think there can be no better way of guarding against it than in observing how *every moment* is spent; and, as I am persuaded I never grew in grace so much as when I was thus employed, as in the former part of this diary, when I ac-

counted for every hour, so I intend renewing the same plan, and commencing to-morrow, please God. This my conscience will accuse or applaud at the close of each day, according as my time is employed; and on that account I shall peruse it every night.

“Allow myself no more time for sleep than necessary.

“*Prayer.*—As I believe no growth in grace will take place unless there be regular stated seasons for private prayer, I purpose attending to *three* such seasons at least:—before I leave my room in the morning, before I retire in the evening, and at twelve o’clock at mid-day. Be where I may, this must be attended to, and I must go home to perform it as if to meet any other person. Besides this, twice family prayer and visits to the sick, &c.

“*Studies.*—All my studies and learning to turn into the channel of the glory of God; to read nothing but with a view to his work, and all my researches to be subservient to the Bible,—to be ‘*homo unius libri.*’ Visit none except for God’s glory, and stay no longer than barely necessary; guard the door of my lips; guard against levity; be much employed in ejaculatory and mental prayer while lying in bed, night and morning, before I sleep and before I get up; to employ myself in self-examination, and this *only*; take with me every day a text as a motto, to be employing myself upon while walking or in my leisure moments, and this day by day.

“Never speak ill of an absent person except the glory of God require it; in short, to do *all* with singleness of heart, so that my rejoicing may be that ‘in *sincerity* and *godly simplicity* I may have my conversation in the world.’ May my God enable me to be more circumspect; and,

as I commence anew in preaching more from study than from art and memory, may my life be commenced anew, and may I die in the service and reign with him forever!"*

* Large Edit. of Life, pp. 131-134.

CHAPTER X.

SERMON PREACHED IN BEHALF OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS IN DUBLIN.

HE is at home now; he rests a little under the shade of his father's roof,—under the roof of that father who said, “In you God has given me my heart's desire; and my first concern is that God may be honored in the accomplishment of his grand design in bringing to glory the lost posterity of Adam; and my daily prayer is that you may be the honored instrument in turning thousands to himself: this is not too much to ask of bleeding love.”*

The sweet breath of spring was returning once more; but, however reviving its breath, mingled therewith was heard the mournful wail of autumn wind,—this floweret of the skies already beginning to droop,—the first sound and token of departing beauty and early decay so close at hand.

Does he listen to autumn's sighing dirge? If he does, it is not with any view to relax his efforts, but, if possible, to increase them. It is true he does decline an invitation to preach the day after his return home, on the ground that his “body required some rest;” but, apart from this, he entered every open door, preaching constantly, and also

* New Edit. of Life, p. 85.

improving every leisure moment in study, especially the study of the Bible. Thus he speaks of this:—

“Applied myself to reading, *principally* in the Book.”

“There is nothing,” says his biographer, “more exemplary in Summerfield’s preparations for ministerial labors than his devoted attention to the Holy Scriptures. He drew water for himself from the well-springs of salvation; and he drew it with joy, that he might refresh his own soul before he went to call aloud to others, ‘Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye unto the waters.’”*

In addition to his other employments at home at this time, he was diligently employed in preparing the annual sermon in behalf of Sunday-schools in Dublin: Mr. Summerfield having received from the committee of arrangement an invitation to preach the same. The Rev. Samuel Wood, a man greatly beloved, cordially seconded this invitation, though, properly speaking, the duty devolved on him. At the first suggestion by one of the committee that Summerfield should preach it, he said he had thought of the same thing himself, and, by his prompt and cheerful acquiescence, removed every difficulty out of the way.

It is perhaps worthy of notice in this place, that, in the announcement in the public papers in Dublin of this sermon, the title of “Rev.” was first used by the Irish Methodists in connection with their ministers, and applied to Mr. Summerfield.†

* New Edit. of Life, p. 88.

† We have the following reference to this in the Narrative we have so frequently quoted:—“Hitherto” (he is speaking of the custom prior to the year 1819–20) “I have not attached the word *Reverend* to the names of my *Irish* brethren, however appropriate; because we were not in the habit of applying

The Sunday-schools in behalf of which this sermon was to be preached were the first ever established in Dublin, the Methodists taking the lead in this great movement;* and this annual occasion was one of great interest, the first dignitaries of the city participating in it,—the lord-mayor and high-sheriff coming in state, and the collectors were gentlemen of rank and distinction. It was therefore a task of no ordinary character which Mr. Summerfield was called upon to perform; and it is clear, from the great care he bestowed in the preparation of the sermon, that he so regarded it.

Not long before he set out for Dublin to fulfil his engagement there, his symptoms assumed a more threatening aspect, increasing the alarm of his friends, and even exciting somewhat his own fears. He was seized with sharp pains and other alarming symptoms, though, by timely aid, they were partially removed. Had he resolved now to take that care of his “poor and feeble constitution” which he afterward did in France when it was too late, perhaps the fine attenuated *silver* cord by which he held to life might have been lengthened out a little, and this golden bowl not quite so soon broken at the fountain; though it is our belief, founded on a careful study of the word of God, in regard to every true child and servant of the Most High,

to each other that honorary epithet. From this time, however, it became customary, not from any agreement among ourselves, (for I never remember to have heard the subject discussed, either in the Conference or out of it,) but from the courtesy of the country, and our more frequent intercourse with the English preachers, among whom it became general.”—*Narrative*, p. 301.

* So we have been informed by a gentleman, now of this city, who was familiar with their history in Dublin from the first.

every one who has a mission of heaven to fulfil, (which is the case with every true child of God,) that what is writ is writ, and the servant is *immortal* till his work is done. On the subject of his health, writing to his father from Marseilles, 7th February, 1823, he said, "In short, I have solemnly joined hands with God to preserve my life and restore my poor and feeble constitution. I have devoted myself to him afresh,—

"‘And promised in this sacred hour,
For God to live and die.’"*

In vain—at all events, at this late hour—this resolve; the physician who attended him in England not long after this saying to one of his dearest friends† that with great care he might live two years longer, but that it was impossible his life could be protracted beyond this period; as it came to pass almost to a day.

Arriving in Dublin some time in April, (travelling by mail,) he prepared, by a renewal of his incessant labors, to tax once more his bodily strength to the utmost. The delivery of this "charity sermon," to use his own words, "for the public Sunday-schools of that city," called together a vast crowd indeed. In a letter to his sister, he says, "Such a multitude" came together "as I could scarcely give you any conception of."‡ Of the delivery of it he thus speaks:—"My Lord and Master lent me his aid; for, if he had not, such a child as I am could not have addressed the thousands assembled on the occasion,"§—Dublin sending out

* New Edit. of Life, p. 173.

† Rev. William Stewart, from Ireland.

‡ New Edit. of Life, p. 103.

§ Ibid.

its state and pride to grace the solemn festival. "The collection," said he, "exceeded all our expectations."

The text chosen for this occasion was as follows:—"I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work." John ix. 4.

This is one of Mr. Summerfield's most carefully-prepared sermons; and it is important to notice, that while he keeps prominently in view the special purpose to be promoted by the discourse, it is made subsidiary to the inculcation of the most vital and distinctive truths and doctrines of the Christian religion; the whole strongly applied, as far as the occasion would anyway admit, to the consciences of the hearers.

The following somewhat extended extract from this sermon will show his views of the doctrine of salvation by *grace*, through faith, and then the product of a genuine faith, all the graces and fruits of the Holy Spirit:—

"The works of the Christian bear a close affinity with these; for the fruits of the Spirit are always the same: as is the Lord, so is the servant, even in this respect. When Christ has revealed himself as a prophet to the sincere soul who has submitted to be thus taught of God, the question of that soul is, 'What shall I do that I may work the works of God?' This is the work of God,—the work which he requires of *you*:—that ye *believe* on God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. When his spiritual life begins, and his suffering scenes begin with it, from the world, the flesh, or the devil, how then runs the promise? 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved.' This is the work which he requires of you:—to hold fast your confidence. But shall these two constitute the character of a Christian? Shall

this faith in Jesus, this first work of God, and this final perseverance in the profession of our faith, be accepted, unaccompanied by fruits? No; it is impossible. Faith which unites to Christ draws from its union with him all those graces which shall fill its possessor with every fruit, even to the abounding in every good work. Faith is the root from which all good works must grow; and in the same proportion as these are not produced, in the same proportion will the plant wither and die away; nay, become *twice dead*, plucked up by the roots. Faith is not a principle which only unites to Christ and brings forth fruit *to itself*, as the Ephesians of old, but fruit *to others*:—‘Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth *much* fruit.’ ‘Let your light so shine *before men*, that they may see your *good works*, and *glorify* your Father,’ (as if by sufferings Christ was glorified, and by our good works the Father is glorified;) and as this conformity to Jesus, when derived from this principle, *faith working by love*, assimilates us most to God, it is the *final work* which God requires, and that by which he will judge us in righteousness:—‘For if we say we love God, and love not (by actions) our brother, we are liars.’ (See Matt. xxv.)

“Thus does God require various work from us, according to our capacity to produce it, that we may ‘work out our own salvation with fear and trembling;’ requiring faith in the sinner as the ground of his justification in the day of grace, and works, when time is afforded to produce them, in the believer, springing from that faith. God himself being the moving spring, he works in us, first the will, and then the power, to do of his own good pleasure. Thus is salvation finally of grace operating in man unto all riches

of goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering. Thus God gets all the glory, while man gets all the reward. 'Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' I have been the more express here, because I do not mean to say much on the *doctrine* of the text in the remainder of my discourse."*

Under the head of *the works peculiar to Christianity* he shows the beneficent spirit of Christianity in contrast with the civilization of Greece and Rome:—

"Christianity, even considered in its tendency to alleviate the natural calamities and promote the moral improvement of mankind, is evidently of God. In the experiment which once God himself permitted to be made by a people who were the centre of civilization and the focus of all human attainments, what do we find to have been accomplished by them to better either of those states? Nothing. 'Man by wisdom knew not God:' none of their philosophers could by searching find him out; and, as they could not find out the *fountain* of all good, it is clear they could not draw from it any of the waters of life to soothe natural affliction or to heal moral disease. The great source of all virtue is the moral character of the Deity, and its only foundation is his will made known by revelation, and his image impressed on the heart. The ideas we form of God are our standard of moral excellence: as are the gods, such will be the worshippers. And what was the character of the pagan deities? Instructed by the fables of their metamorphoses and sanctioned by their examples, their unhappy votaries lost all traces of goodness. . . .

* Sermons, pp. 146, 147.

"In the woful description given of them in the first chapter of Romans, in which the apostles lead us by the hand, step by step, into the horrors of that cavern whose bottom was level with the mouth of hell, he asserts that the first step into it was made from the views they had of Deity:—they had changed the truth of God into a lie; and this, he says, was '*because* that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful;' it was thus that they 'became vain in their reasonings, and their foolish hearts were darkened;' it was thus that, 'professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.' And what were the consequences? As to *moral* disease, we find the very ideas *horrid*, and we cannot stand upon the mouth of this spiritual crater longer than a moment to look into the deep, damning depravity; human reason recoils, the heart sickens at the sight, and the vapors arising from this lava of spiritual corruption oblige us to withdraw:—'being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.'

"As to *natural* infirmity, it was also forgotten. While they gloried in their attainments and looked down on all the world, no Godlike institutions were formed to receive those whose calamities should have rendered them the pity of mankind. While temple after temple was upreared for

the worship of fictitious deities, those beings who were made in the likeness of the true Deity were passed unheeded by. . . . The humane, simple, unostentatious virtues, so conducive to the happiness of social life, were utterly disregarded; weakness had no asylum, poverty no friend; what are called the charities of life were unknown. Ignorant of the true nature of the Deity, they saw nothing in him but vengeful ire, to appease which, even by the *enlightened* Romans, human sacrifices were not unfrequently made. Being given over to an undiscerning mind, they could not discover the lustre of mercy in the diadem of the Deity. Hence Paul says they themselves were unmerciful; nay, they had not *natural affection*.”*

Of *Dublin* in particular he thus speaks:—

“This favored city is the astonishment of every stranger. Let him walk where he will, let him ascend the summit of observation, and he sees edifices which, by their appearance, lead his mind to inquiry, and fill it with astonishment when he finds them receptacles of disease, pain, wretchedness, and want. . . . But as the gospel of Christ is one which must change the *heart*, subdue our nature, and plant the seed of true morality,—‘the love of God in Christ,’—so our institutions for the promotion of this and the remedying of *moral* disease leave the former ‘no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth.’ In the same proportion as the value of the soul exceeds that of the body, in the same should our exertions for the salvation of the one exceed those for the salvation of the other.”†

In this truly practical and sound discourse he thus speaks

* Sermons, pp. 147–149.

† Ibid. pp. 149, 159.

of the Bible Society, Missionary Societies, and Sunday-schools:—

“Of late this truth has become practical: institutions have been formed which confine not their influences within any walls, however spacious. Like Him who does not confine his special or essential presence to temples made with hands, so these scatter their light over all the face of creation. The objects of beneficence are not brought within any concentrated pale, but they are sought out far and wide, in every land of darkness or house of wo, and before they can express their wants they find themselves possessed of their supplies.

“Among these institutions we class the *Bible Society*. Through the wide field of the universe the gospel is now working its way; and, under God, it is by the instrumentality of those who imbibe its spirit and feel its power, —those who are the true patriots of mankind, scattering around the seeds of religious knowledge,—those who are the genuine philanthropists, who dispel the mists of superstition, and say to the nations, ‘Behold your God!’—those who, by circulating Bibles in the different languages of mankind, annul the curse of Babel and hold communion with all nations of the earth on a subject which involves their destinies, the immortal destinies of the whole human race. This is the cause of God! It will prevail!

“Other of these institutions are *Missionary Societies*, the handmaids of the Bible: it was not good that she should be alone; a help-meet was provided. God has ever raised up men willing to die in the harness while drawing along the ark of our God, and among the distinguished the name of *Coke* will stand high enrolled. Possessed of a bo’

naturally weak,—for it was born to ease, yet trained to hardship in the school of Christ,—nineteen times he crossed the great Atlantic; as no dangers could intimidate him, so no obstacles could damp the ardor of his soul: he was the slave of Jesus! But, alas! he is not; for God took him. He fell a victim to his zeal, and sunk into the ocean's bed. The body of this Moses has indeed been hidden from us; but we sorrow not as those without hope; 'his frame unwasted by disease, his features not distorted by pain,' show the hand of mercy in the dispensation; the silver cord was gently untied, and the spirit dismissed, while the body was committed to the watery grave in its accustomed bloom,—fair presage of its beauteous resurrection! He shall not be forgotten; for, on that day when God shall count his jewels, Coke shall be gathered from the ocean's bed, a diamond of the purest water.

"The institution of *Sunday-schools* is the completion of a Godlike trinity, a three in one, which leads up to the great THREE-ONE-JEHOVAH GOD. Though I name this institution last, it is not of inferior importance to either of the two preceding; I only class it in this order that I may dwell on it the more. The former relate generally to the dispersion of the truth of God to foreign lands; this is a native crop. While the former, in a certain sense, drain our coffers, this replenishes them and provides for the continuance of the others to another generation. . . .

"In whatever point of view Sunday-schools are considered, they are of incalculable importance. It may be laid down, . . . nay, the politician, the lover of his country, cannot but be assured, that, so far as its influence extends, the best interests of mankind must be promoted.

But what are the benefits accruing to the individual? It is an institution which makes not human learning the acme of its instructions, but that learning which makes wise unto salvation. It combines genius with piety, &c. And thus the *eternal* concerns of man, his best interests, are allied to the temporal advantages it holds forth."*

* Sermons, pp. 150-152.

More lately there has been established in Dublin the Religious Tract and Book Society, of which, in her "Letters from Ireland," written in the year 1837, Charlotte Elizabeth thus speaks:—"One of my first movements here was to visit again that rich magazine of spiritual stores, the Religious Tract and Book Society's depôt, in Upper Sackville Street. . . . This institution has wrought an immense amount of solid good in the land, not only among the poor, but peculiarly in the higher ranks of society. . . . The Tract and Book Society is a valuable instrument in promoting the knowledge of the truth, and its utility in following up the works of the various schools is incalculable."—pp. 90, 91.

CHAPTER XI.

SERMON IN BEHALF OF THE FEMALE ORPHAN ASYLUM.

He does not tarry any longer in Dublin this visit than the former: perhaps a week, or at most two weeks, comprised the whole of his present stay. With speed surprising, with ardor unceasing, he hastens to preach the gospel in various places in the adjoining county of Wicklow; purposing, however, to return to the city the following month to preach the annual sermon in behalf of the "Female Orphan Asylum."

The spirit of those worthies who more than half a century before his day had sown and watered all this region with their prayers and tears was his; the mantle of such men as Olivers and Dillon, and Walsh and Bradburn, and Bourke and Blackwell, and, in more recent times, of a Griffith and an Ousely, had descended on him; and, like them, he went forth weeping, bearing precious seed.

Apart from the two Wesleys, John and Charles, (those holy and blessed men of God,) a host of witnesses who had labored in all this region long ere his eyes had seen the light or his "infant lips had learned to form themselves in prayer," held him in full survey. From the battlements of the skies they now (their warfare ended and their battles fought) joyfully looked down, happy to behold this youthful

evangelist fighting in the lists as they did, and treading in their steps.

In the dark and cloudy day when friends were few and homes far between, when mobs followed their steps with insults and every opprobrious epithet was heaped on their name, these men (of whom, like the elders of old, the world was not worthy) preached repentance toward God and *faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ; and many were the witnesses raised up by God to testify to the truth spoken by them. Many there were who then felt the power of the truth as conveyed by the Spirit of God to their hearts, in their deliverance, perfect and entire, from inbred sin, and the formation of the image of God in their souls.

It may not be amiss, and, indeed, we deem it proper and kindred with the design of this work, to draw a picture here of one of the early scenes connected with the rise and progress of Methodism in Ireland, bringing as it does before our view the manner of life, and *faith*, and labors, of one of those men of God in the past, in whose sainted footsteps the youthful Summerfield gladly trod, smiling, like him, at toil and pain.

In Limerick, on the 17th day of March, 1749, a great mob had gathered about and was following a fine, portly-looking man, one whose appearance was everyway prepossessing and gentlemanly, hooting at and personally insulting him. When inquiry was made by any one as to the cause of all this, the reply was that the man was one of the people called "Swaddlers,"—this the opprobrious epithet in those times (yes, and long after) of a Methodist preacher in Ireland.

The name of this servant of the Lord Jesus was Mr.

Robert Swindels; who, passing through Limerick on his way to Cork, was now about to preach in the street,—this sermon the first that was heard from a Wesleyan-Methodist preacher in this city. He spoke, and great was the impression that was produced; his Master, who, like him, had been hooted at and derided by a wicked and scornful mob, and who felt for his servant drinking of his cup and baptized with his baptism, stood by him and suffered not his word to fall to the ground.

The Lord having touched favorably and graciously some hearts, a house was opened for him to preach in that evening, which he did, the same divine unction attending the word. Being now strongly urged to tarry a little longer with them, he did so, preaching for three successive days. Returning again in a month, a small society was formed as the fruits of his first visit, of which the one from whose valuable letters we derive the above account was among the first, if not indeed the very first, to rise and join the new class on probation,—a member from that day of the Methodist society, of which she was truly a shining light and ornament a little over half a century, most of which time she sojourned in Limerick.*

* We refer to Mrs. Eliza Bennis, who came to this country toward the close of her life, dying in this city (Philadelphia) in June, 1802, aged seventy-seven years. She was a woman of most superior understanding, of deep acquaintance with the things of God, and richly meriting the honorable appellation of a mother in Israel. Her letters—a rich legacy of truth to the church—were published by her son, Thomas Bennis, in this city, in 1809, under this title:—"Christian Correspondence; being a Collection of Letters written by the late Rev. John Wesley, the late Mrs. Eliza Bennis, and others." We ourselves, in the providence of God, were indebted for a copy of so rare and valuable a work

Sharing with such men as Robert Swindels, Dillon, Olivers, and others,—the dear departed of other years,—the spirit of his Master, heeding not even the admonitory whisper from within of early death, regardless of toil, of pain, of weariness, he turns, as we have already seen, his back again upon the city, anxious to fulfil his engagements, sparing not himself while any degree of life, or health, or strength remained.

His preaching tour into the county of Wicklow revives recollections of the past,—pleasant family recollections. In former years, ere yet his eldest sister had married and left them, they all together, as a family, had visited an object of great interest in this county,—“The Dargle.” Here, when but a lad, in life’s early day, in this profound solitude he had fed his imagination, looking down into the *glen* from a great height, listening to the incessant roar of the falling waters, and marking the course of the stream along its narrow, rocky bed: all objects shut out from the sight by the ancient wood which hangs over the steep declivities or mountain-sides that form the *glen*, and which extends in one unbroken forest far and wide in every direction. Profoundly impressed was he, we are sure, with this scene; and we think it highly probable this scene was before his eyes when, in one of the most glowing scenes he ever pictured in the pulpit, he described Elijah by the brook

to Mrs. S. Wiggins, the present matron of that most benevolent and truly Christ-like institution, the “Howard Home” of this city; an institution established and sustained by the Society of Friends, and which, though but little known and of short existence, has already resulted in much practical good. We speak of that of which in part we know.

Cherith fed by the raven with flesh and bread in the morning and flesh and bread in the evening.*

Mr. Summerfield had not been in Wicklow till now since this family excursion. Very different thoughts and scenes were in his mind then from now. He thus refers to them:—
“Never had I been in this county since we all visited ‘The Dargle.’ What were my sensations, thou, O God, knowest; not visiting it at this time on a pleasurable excursion, but preaching the word of the kingdom of God. So great was our number of hearers, that I was obliged to preach in the *open air*. The Lord sowed the seed plentifully in many hearts, and I believe fruit will be found from it in the day of our Lord Jesus.”†

Such was the celebrity of his name, that the head of the first family in this county, the Hon. Mrs. Tighe, of Rosanna, (the patronage of the county is in this family,) invited him to her residence, and pressed him strongly to spend the summer with her. She loved and honored him not only for the fascination of his manner and the loveliness of his character in social and domestic life, but for the grace of God that dwelt so richly in him; and Mr. Summerfield says of her, “I believe she will prove a trophy of the Redeemer’s death.”‡

Perhaps this short sojourn in this lovely county and proximity to the sea revived somewhat his feeble but elastic frame; but what little amendment he may have found from

* We will have occasion to speak of this wonderfully-impressive picture he drew one Sabbath evening in Duane Street Church, New York, when we speak of his labors and ministry in this country.

† New Edit. of Life, p. 104.

‡ Ibid.

this excursion in a congenial season was more than counter-balanced by a fall from his horse as he re-entered Dublin. He had left Wicklow in the morning, a distance of more than twenty *Irish* miles from Dublin, and was riding down Stephen's Green, when his horse, jaded with his day's journey, stumbled and threw him directly over his head; Mr. Summerfield falling to the ground with great violence, and losing for a time his consciousness. Upon regaining his consciousness, he did not appear to have sustained any material damage, (feeling only a slight pain in his side,) and, remounting his horse, proceeded on his way.

This happened on Tuesday evening; and the following Sunday he preached the annual sermon in behalf of "The Female Orphan Asylum."

Among the numerous institutions of charity in Dublin (and no city in the world, it is said, has so many public charitable institutions as the capital of Ireland*) is to be placed the asylum for *female* orphans, established by the Methodists. At the period whereof we write, as we have already seen, this home of the *orphans* was on one side of the Book-Room, in Whitefriar Street, and was one of the golden clusters of that rich and noble vine which Wesleyan Methodism had planted here.

The orphans supported were not very numerous, but they were well provided for: a clean, nice home they had;

* We may here mention some of the most prominent of these public institutions:—The Blue-coat Hospital; the Royal Hospital; the Workhouse; the House of Industry, in Channel Row; the Charitable Infirmary; the Hospital for Incurables; Mercer's Hospital; Dr. Steeven's Hospital; the Lying-in Hospital; St. Patrick's Hospital for Lunatics; Simpson's Hospital; the Meath Hospital; and many others of inferior note.

and yearly their appeal for support met with a generous response.

During the service they occupied the front gallery in the church, attired in their pretty green dresses, white kerchiefs, and straw bonnets, their youth and orphanage constituting the strongest claim upon the sympathies and benevolence of the audience. On this occasion their cause was to be pleaded by one who, himself left motherless when thirteen years of age, and with sisters early deprived of that mother's care, felt all the forlornness of their unprotected condition.

Of his own feelings during the preaching of this sermon Mr. Summerfield thus speaks:—

“Never did I preach with so much effect. I was enabled to paint their loss in liveliest colors. I spoke from nature: Amelia and Anne were before my eyes, and the remembrance of a mother's loss operated on my own feelings most powerfully. The impression was general; emotion thrilled through every heart. I could say no more, but beckoned for the little dear ones to stand up and plead their own cause in *silent eloquence*. I sat down and pleaded for them with my tears. I need not tell you the effect.”*

Of that part of his discourse where he says, “I spoke from nature: Amelia and Anne were before my eyes,” the following extract will enable us to form some conception of *what* he said, and the *manner* in which he said it:—

“But I again take up the pencil and reverse the scene:—the mother is removed and the father is spared! Of all

* New Edit. of Life, p. 105.

objects under heaven, a motherless daughter, in the morning of life, is the most pitiable! Pining anguish enters her little soul. The father, seldom at home, is diverted in some degree from his grief while pursuing his daily duty, and the strength of mature reason has fortified his mind: meantime the infant mind wastes itself away. It walks amid the scene of all its past comforts,—stares with seeming wildness on them all. A thousand little arrangements made by the mother's hand combine to keep the wound still fresh while she gazes on them with mournful pleasure: her mother's image is ever present before her, and she sees her in the armed chair, and rises and treads the domestic rounds: the sigh heaves, the tear gushes out, the streams flow, and 'Mother! mother!' involuntarily escapes her lips, for it is uppermost in her heart. The father seldom views the scene. She carefully conceals her grief, attends him in her mother's stead, reads his wishes in his eye, anticipates his wants; but, though stedfastly she reads his looks, she cannot trace the soft lineaments of a *mother's face* or find a *mother's smile*. But the father is removed; and now weigh the affliction. Surrounded by a gloom which will not suffer hope to shed a ray, she is but one remove from the *shadow of death*. Death had eclipsed in eternal night her all of joy ere the shade of the intervening monster had been dispelled from her abode. Saw you such a scene, and would no messenger of peace step into this dreary haunt, and at least ameliorate, if he cannot restore, by quieting the distress on account of future support? Would none be found to whisper to the throbbing heart, 'Peace, be still!' This tale is not

fiction: I have shown you the picture; there are the living images!”*

We have also in this sermon, so far as his *pen* could draw it, one of those paintings he occasionally sketched in the pulpit, and which, once heard, haunt the memory and imagination ever afterward. The extract we now proceed to make will perhaps give some little idea of his power in this respect,—yet a faint idea at the best. It is a picture of the family scene ere death has entered and marred its entireness and beauty. He thus speaks:—

“How pleasant the domestic scene of a family perfect and entire! What happiness centres in that dwelling! What heartfelt delight beams from the windows of the soul! ‘See the traveller:—how joyfully does he hail the hour of his return when he shall occupy the vacant spot in his domestic circle! Behold the man of science:—closing the volume of his deep research, he smoothes his wrinkled brow, and, in the cheerful, happy scene of his domestic bliss, he forgets that he is the philosopher, and thinks himself the child. Take the man of trade:—how cheerfully does he support the weariness of his calling throughout the livelong day by the grateful thought that by-and-by the season of intercourse—sweet season—will arrive! Yonder comes the laborer:—he has borne the burden and heat of the day; the descending sun has released him from his toil; he is hastening home to enjoy repose. Half-way down yonder lane, by the side of which stands a cottage, his children run to meet him; one he carries and

* Sermons, pp. 90, 91.

one he leads. The companion of his humble life is ready to furnish him with his plain repast. See! his toilworn countenance assumes an air of cheerfulness; his hardships are forgotten, fatigue vanishes; he eats and is satisfied. The evening is fair; he walks with uncovered head around his garden; enters again and retires to rest; and the rest of the laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much. Inhabitant of this lonely dwelling, who can be indifferent to thy comfort? Peace be to this house!"**

* See Sermon on James i. 27, p. 82:—"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

CHAPTER XII.

ATTENDS THE IRISH CONFERENCE AT DUBLIN, JULY, 1819.

AFTER the labors of the Sabbath were over, (having preached for the orphans at two o'clock in the afternoon, and then again preaching at seven in the evening, and to large congregations each time,) owing to the exertions he made on this day the pain that he had felt in his left side at the time of his fall returned; and on the Tuesday following, "after throwing off a quantity of congealed blood from his lungs, the fresh blood began to flow profusely, and it was found he had broken a bloodvessel on the lungs."* The blood ceasing to flow toward night, he set out on Wednesday morning by mail for Waterford, a distance of seventy-four miles. The motion of the coach brought on another vomiting of blood, and he reached the end of his journey very feeble indeed. A night's rest having once more stanch'd the blood, he "ventured," he says, to preach on Friday evening; but the exertion was too much, the effort was too great; he was entirely exhausted by this last effort of his overtaxed frame. A physician was called in; and, though the more alarming symptoms were soon removed, he remained for several weeks in a weak and debilitated state.

* Letter to his Sister; New Edit. of Life, p. 105.

He was seized with this his first serious sickness—which, indeed, was not yet unto death—at the house of the Rev. W. Stewart,—one who loved him greatly and whom he loved greatly. Great was the joy of the people at his return to Waterford; but to none was his presence more welcome than his “beloved Brother Stewart.” Indeed, wherever he went his presence was as sunshine, or as the return of spring after “the winter is past and the rain is over and gone.” Alas! alas! in so dark a world that so bright a vision should so soon pass away,—on so weary an earth, in so desert a scene, that such a flower should waft its bloom away so soon.

During the month of June Mr. Summerfield slowly recruited. He had designed to spend this month (the month immediately preceding the approaching Irish Conference) preaching in behalf of the foreign missions, in the south of Ireland, in Cork, in Bandon, and other places, but was obliged to relinquish this large design. Toward the close of the month, finding himself somewhat improved in health, though still quite feeble, he set out with his friend and brother, the Rev. W. Stewart, to attend the Conference in Dublin, the Conference commencing its session on the first day of the month.*

* Waterford, where Mr. Summerfield was first seriously ill, sent out a vine to Newfoundland, (a large and flourishing trade is carried on between Waterford and Newfoundland,) which took root there and blessed that dreary land, that inhospitable clime. Among those who went from Waterford to Newfoundland to better their condition was John Stretton, who for twenty years or more stood up for the truth there, and at last, when scarce a vestige of pure and undefiled religion was left, built a church, out of his own hard-earned and scanty means, at Harbor Grace. In 1771, just before Stretton left Water-

On their way to the Conference, this David and Jonathan had pleasant converse together; their hearts knit together as the heart of one man, the season of the year propitious, the road passing through rich and varied scenery, and,

ford for the *Banks*, little knowing the things that would befall him there, but elate with hope and expectation, Mrs. Eliza Bennis visited Waterford from Limerick. Becoming acquainted during this visit with young Stretton, she diligently and prayerfully sought to impress on his susceptible mind the infinite importance of religion; and after his departure, for many long successive years, she watered the seed she had sown by her invaluable letters. Deeply did Mr. Stretton value these letters, highly did he prize them; and that he stood firm amid so much evil example and against so much opposition is to be attributed mainly, in the hand of God, to the wise counsel and seasonable words of this holy woman.

For over twenty years Mr. John Stretton labored almost alone, under every disadvantage, having trial of cruel mockings and exposed to much persecution; at one time losing nearly the whole of his property through the evil designs and malicious cunning of men whose ire his fidelity to the cause of Christ had excited. Though engaged for many years in the fishery-business, yet he exhorted and preached, holding meetings on the Sabbath in summer, and in winter, the fishery over, in company with Arthur Thomey, (a yoke-fellow indeed, and whose name smells sweet from the dust,) travelling from place to place in that dreary region and along the desolate coast, (so bare, so bleak!) preaching to those who otherwise would not have heard the joyful sound.

During the long interval, Mr. Wesley sent out two preachers at the earnest solicitation of Mr. Stretton; but they neither of them did well: they were both an injury to the cause, though the second one far more so than the first.* These unfortunate appointments tended greatly to the decay of religion; the little society grew weaker and weaker, and the Methodist name was a byword and reproach; yet in this hour Mr. Stretton's faith abounded. He thus speaks of this dark day himself:—"In these troublesome times, with every possible

* We do not care to recall these ill-omened names. The most awful sight on earth is a back-sliding minister of the gospel

among the rest, through the far-famed Vale of Avoca, the road taking you in sight of the spot where the "streamlet" that runs through this "valley so sweet" is met by transverse streams, giving rise to that "meeting of the waters" which, at first producing some little noise and perturbation, soon dies into quiet,—the various waters, the different streams, soon mingling into one.

The Conference commenced its sessions on the 1st of July, at six o'clock A.M.,—the Rev. J. Edmondson, President. The result of the year presented an increase of 3528 members; showing that, despite prevailing agitation, the year had been one of spiritual prosperity; the labors

discouragement, no friend or brother to assist, and reproach pouring down on the Methodist name,—I say, with all this to discourage me, I began to build a meeting-house in Harbor Grace, and opened it the last day of August of this year. I built it at my own expense; for we have no society, and this is the only thing at present that keeps up the Protestant name in this place. The Protestant minister is worse than none, and few go to church; while Popery, like a deluge, sweeps away the rest."

But help was not far off; the night was far spent, and the day was at hand. The house that he had built for God was dedicated to his blessed and glorious service on the last day of August of the year of our Lord 1788; and in the summer of 1791 Newfoundland was visited by the Rev. William Black, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, from Halifax, Nova Scotia.

A most extraordinary work of God broke out under the ministry of Mr. Black; and, in the course of his short stay of six weeks, some sixty persons were added to the Lord, mostly young persons, besides the serious impressions that were made on the minds of many little children. Thus did God revive the heart of his servant, as he did that of Jacob, by the sound of the distant rumbling of his chariot-wheels, giving him to see, after so long a space and through so many evil days, the chief desire of his longing heart.*

* See Correspondence of Mrs. Eliza Bennie.

of Mr. Summerfield contributing largely to the general peace, union, and harmony that prevailed.

Owing to the very delicate state of Mr. Summerfield's health and the little prospect there was of his doing effective service in the Conference this year, his name was placed on the *reserve* list, it not being deemed prudent to place him on a circuit. He was, however, requested to labor in Dublin during the temporary absence of Mr. Mayne, one of the regularly-stationed preachers of the city for this year. To this he consented, though a more onerous duty could scarcely have been laid upon him.

The only public exercises in which Mr. Summerfield was enabled to participate during the Conference was the general missionary meeting, at which, says the Rev. Mr. Lanktree, (himself present,) "young Summerfield spoke with an astonishing display of Christian oratory."*

The session of Conference having closed, he commenced, feeble as he was, his temporary ministry in Dublin, preaching from "*five to seven and nine times a week.*"† In few words he speaks of his arduous labors thus in this city at this time:—"The duty was very severe for me in my weak state; the weather was so very warm and the congregations so overflowing, it was at the hazard of my life. However, God was with me, and he suffered not a hair of my head to perish. Blessed be his name!"‡

In Dublin, as well as elsewhere, wherever he labored, his society was sought by all, from the highest to the lowest. He never neglected the poor for the rich; neither did he

* Narrative, p. 300.

† Large Edit. of Life, p. 153.

‡ New Edit. of Life, p. 106.

altogether neglect the rich. Among the rich as among the poor did he carry his Master with him, and make mention of his name,—yea, of *his* only. Was it the Hon. Mrs. Butler, of Richmond Place?—the Hon. Mrs. Tighe, of Wicklow? Was it the Governor of Bandon? Was it the Earl of Rosse and family? Sought out and entertained by them, treated with every mark of regard, he used such opportunities to enforce the absolute necessity of evangelical repentance and *faith* in Christ in order to their eternal salvation. He did not withhold the truth from any, no matter how high their station or rank, or how distinguished soever they were for their talents. He was not dazzled by the glare of talents, or high station, or eminent reputation, but saw them all in the light of eternity, and sought to impress, above all things else, eternal realities on the minds of all.

While in Dublin he drew up the following resolutions, which relate to his numerous invitations abroad, and which show how alive he was to the value of every fleeting moment, every vanishing breath:—

“1. *Never to go out to breakfast.* This squanders all the forenoon away, which is the most valuable part of my time.

“2. *With regard to dining abroad.* As I purpose rising at four in the morning, and remaining in my studies, &c. till dinner-time, it may not injure me to relax my mind by dining abroad; but let me always take care to bring Jesus with me, and guard against religious dissipation.

“3. *Never to breakfast, dine, &c. abroad on Saturday.*

“4. *Always to return home after preaching, and never to go back to the family with whom I dined.* This does no good, keeps the family up, and injures my own health.

“5. Avoid all *tea-parties*, as they are called, as much as possible: they seldom do good.”*

It was during this temporary summer service in Dublin that he preached the sermon entitled, “Service for God always Rewarded,” with a view to the erection of a new chapel in Lower Abbey Street. At this time the gloom that had been brooding over the land was fast passing away; the “pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noonday,” and the famine, gaunt and wolfish, that had stalked through the streets, were about ended; there was no more any scarcity of bread: but “the Lord, laying aside chastisements, had filled their storehouses with the overflowings of his providence; all nature teemed with life; and food in abundance for man and beast had been provided.”†

Under these propitious and favoring circumstances the people of the Lord in Dublin undertook to enlarge their borders by building them a new chapel; and Mr. Summerfield (whose services were in great request on every important public occasion) was invited to preach specially in behalf of the new enterprise. The text (taken from Ezek. xxix. 17–20) was founded upon the prophecy where God gives to Nebuchadnezzar Egypt as a remuneration for the siege of Tyre, continued for many long-protracted years, yet, in the end, no spoil from the captured city accruing to the Babylonian king.

After a brief explanation of the circumstances under which the prophecy was written, which constituted the first head of the discourse, Mr. Summerfield proceeded, under

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 154.

† Sermons, p. 77.

the second head, to speak of "the instruction which it is intended we should draw from it." This is threefold:—

1. The passage affords a striking view of, and insight into, some of the mysterious acts of God's providence.

2. It is an instance of the goodness and severity of God.

But the chief point of instruction which he draws from the prophecy, and on which he mainly relies as a *motive* to urge to the work in which the brethren were about to engage, was—3. "That service of any kind done for God never goes unrewarded."

He propounds such good and wholesome doctrine under this last head, that we quote nearly the whole of what he said. He spoke as follows:—

"When I speak of service done for God I would not be supposed to say that the utmost of the powers of any *creature* could render any true and proper service to the *Creator*. He is independent of the creature; the cause can never be dependent on its effect; he could act both in the natural and moral world without human agency, and doubtless he would have done so had it been as agreeable to his wisdom as it was easy to his power. In the case before us he could have sent an angel, as he did to the Assyrians, to destroy them. But where would be the reward of the faithful steward? In the *moral* world the power which he manifested on the day of Pentecost might be again exerted. But what room, then, for the work of faith, the labor of love, and the patience of hope? It is in making the one subservient to the other that he has strengthened the bands which unite society together, and accepts services of his creatures as if done for himself.

"We are sometimes afraid of touching on these subjects,

lest we should seem to incline to the doctrine of a salvation by works; and some of our hearers are occasionally offended if works are mentioned at all: none, however, will come under this character but such as profess Christ in words but in works deny him; such as cry, 'Lord, Lord!' but know nothing of going about doing good. Show me thy faith without thy works, and St. James shall tell thee it is no more than the faith which devils possess; it produces no fruit. But the Christian gives evidence of the genuine character of his faith by his works:—'I will show thee my faith by my works;' and, though good works are not the meritorious condition of our title to eternal life, yet they are the twin graces of genuine faith, and, according to their number and kind, will be the gift of eternal glory; for it is by works that we give evidence of the strength of that principle from which they were produced,—the love of God shed abroad in the heart, or Christ dwelling there by faith. Where this exists they will follow as necessarily as an effect its cause; and, if God have blessed us with ability, we shall abound, overflow, in every good word and work.

"Would to God the natural selfishness of many professing Christians were overcome! How few are the number of our Dorcases,—those who not only relieve, but *go* and relieve; seek out the haunts of wretchedness, the charnel-houses of death; soften the pillow of the dying saint, and administer to Christ through his afflicted members! Did Christians consider more that this is the very rule of judgment on which God will try the world, they would *practise* as well as profess. How can they expect to hear it said, 'I was an-hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me

in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me'? Oh, if a blush could tinge the immortal countenance, would it not be excited by the recollection of how seldom did we perform such acts? and, if pain could possess their glorified nature, would it not be produced by the wish, 'Oh that I had loved him more and served him better!'

"But, brethren, we hope better things of you, though we thus speak, and things which pertain to salvation. We trust that your obedient hearts are ever waiting for opportunities of doing good, and that your cry continually is, 'Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?' 'Make known thy will, and, as thou hast freely given me, I will freely render back to thee. Only honor me by making use of me, either my time, talents, substance, health, strength, life, nay, death itself; suffer me to be thy slave, and to lay all at the feet of that Savior who laid his very life at my feet that I might rise exalted by his fall and find in him my all in all!'"*

* Sermons, pp. 80, 81.

Immediately after the sermon, which was delivered in Whitefriar Street Chapel, the friends of the proposed enterprise adjourned to the "lobby," which, we will recollect, was over the *nave* or body of the building. The subscription which was taken up on this occasion was large, many present, having the ability so to do, subscribing with great liberality; the result of which was the present Methodist chapel in Lower Abbey Street.

It is worthy of remark that in this new chapel the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was first administered in Dublin by Methodist preachers. It is pleasing also to notice that, at the opening of the chapel, the Episcopal form of Common Prayer, (as abbreviated by Mr. Wesley,) with the "Lessons" for the day, formed part of the services; and the practice has been continued to this time. Another alteration in "church order" marked the opening of this

Thus laboring during the oppressive heat of the summer, in pain, in weakness extreme, in the pulpit and out of it, showing all fidelity to the Master he so much loved, about the middle of September Mr. Mayne returned from Lime-rick to Dublin, and relieved Mr. Summerfield of a load which he could have borne but a little while longer.

It would seem as if now he would rest; but, having made engagements to preach based on the return of Mr. Mayne, he proceeded to fill them as soon as he was at liberty to do so, taking no time for necessary leisure or repose. He proceeded first to Parson's-town, or Birr, nearly seventy miles south from Dublin, the residence of the Earl of Rosse, who entertained for him very special regard, and had, at the instance of Mr. Summerfield, given a most eligible lot of ground whereon to erect a new and more commodious

chapel. Instead of public services on the Sabbath commencing, as of old, at seven o'clock in the morning and closing at eight A.M., the society had service in church hours, the Methodist society standing now on its own independent ground; the division between Methodism and the Established Church of England perfected.

It is a little remarkable that no Methodist church or congregation has introduced, *in part at least*, the Episcopal form of Common Prayer in this country. As a manual of public prayer, of religious devotion, it is incomparable. There is food there for all, for saint and sinner; from the faintest sigh of penitence to the highest state of perfect love, of absolute devotion to God; while its recognition of Christ in the flesh,—this sheet-anchor of the soul,—its distinct enunciation of the Savior in his priestly, regal, and prophetic offices, and the trumpet-voice with which it speaks of the grandest and sublimest of all mysteries,—the doctrine of the holy, glorious, blessed, and adorable Trinity, (three persons and one God,)—should give it a response in every true Christian heart, loud-sounding and soul-filling as the mighty ocean's swelling wave; nay, as the sound of many waters heaving upward from eternity's bosom, and falling on the silent and solemn shore of time.

place of worship. On this occasion, instead of preaching in the small Methodist chapel, at the request of the earl, the service was held in the court-house at two o'clock in the afternoon, a large number of the nobility and gentry present, and others, "many of whom," says his biographer, "had never before heard a Methodist sermon." "At first," continues his biographer, "he was somewhat overawed; but, casting his care on the Lord, he felt his usual liberty, and several of his friends afterward declared that they never heard him preach with greater pathos or energy. Although the congregation was large, and composed of all ranks and sects, the most profound attention prevailed, and many appeared affected."*

He himself says, in his letter to his sister, of which we have made so much use, "I believe the word of truth cut its own way. I trust these noble ones too will be among the number of the *few rich* who are called to eternal life."†

From Parson's-town he went to Roscrea, and also to other places, preaching in the course of *seven* days eleven times, and then returning to Dublin, making in all, in this one little week, in his feeble state of health, eleven sermons and one hundred and sixty miles, travelling on his Master's business with the lightning-speed of Bonaparte when he hastened to Paris as the allies were entering it, hoping thereby to save his falling empire.

But he had performed his last week of excessive labor. From this day with slower step he moved, glad, during his residue of days and hours, at considerable intervals of time,

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 155.

† New Edit. of Life, p. 107.

to preach *once* or *twice*, or at most *thrice*, a week. As the fiery courser which champed the bit, pawing fiercely the ground and snuffing the scent of war from afar, with nostrils wide distended, crying, "Aha, aha!" is not quite dismissed from the tented field or wholly removed from the sound of the shrill pipe and alarum-drum, (the spirit of the warlike horse glowing as intensely as ever, but his great strength weakened in the way,) so with this valorous champion for Jesus and the cross. The failing body will no more second the dauntless, untired spirit; and, though but one short year has elapsed since he commenced his ministry in Cork, his natural fires are nearly all spent, and this bright light is preparing to pass away with the suddenness of an equinoctial day,—the short, tremulous twilight quickly succeeded by tropical darkness.*

He had hardly returned to Dublin, when he received a letter from his father, strongly urging his return home on the ground of his health and needful rest. Wisely, surely, in this instance, yielding to the urgent entreaty of his father, he returned to Cork, perhaps himself feel-

* A writer, speaking of Pollock, has a sentence which applies alike to both these young men; young men of kindred *spirit* and genius, each first and supreme in his own sphere. This is the sentence:—"And that gospel was the torch which, on the hills of Renfrewshire, fired a young spirit, Pollock,—himself both sacrifice and altar-pile,—till Britain spied the light, and wondered at the brief but brilliant beacon."*

* *Literary Attractions of the Bible.* By the Rev. James Hamilton, Minister of the Scotch Church, Regent Square, London. Delivered before the Young Men's Christian Association, in Exeter Hall, November 27, 1849. Published by the American Tract Society, New York. *

ing that it was high time. His timely return was probably the appointed means, in the hands of a kind and gracious Providence, of saving his life at this time, and opening the way for even a wider field of usefulness than he had yet seen, God having a great work for him to accomplish in this country.

CHAPTER XIII.

SICKNESS.

"ON the 10th of October," says his biographer, "Mr. Summerfield again arrived at his father's house in Cork, after having been thoroughly drenched with a day-and-night's rain on the outside of the coach, which had broken down twice on the journey."*

God had raised up friends for his young servant in every direction; and hardly had he reached home, when Mr. Edwards, of Hop Island, hoping to render him service, invited him to his hospitable mansion.† One day, returning with Mr. Edwards in his carriage to Cork, he was seized in a sudden and most violent manner; violent spasms came on, his breath stopped, and he lost all consciousness. The

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 156.

† Among the numerous dear friends that God raised up for Mr. Summerfield in Ireland, his biographer specially mentions Mr. Perrin and family, of Wicklow; Wicklow, like Joppa, seated on the seaside. Of this kind family Mr. Summerfield thus speaks:—"April 28, [1819.]-We arrived at Mr. Perrin's, where we were most cordially received. This family spoil me with too much kindness. Mrs. Nolan, the eldest daughter, is the most loving companion I ever met with; indeed, I know not whom to admire the most, the mother or the daughter. Mrs. Perrin is a mother indeed."*

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 141.

cause of the attack was a certain glandular obstruction, which had been for some time growing on him, and was occasioned chiefly, if not solely, by excessive fatigue and labor.

"All I remember of the attack," says Mr. Summerfield, "was that my tongue doubled in my mouth, my mouth itself and face were awfully distorted toward my left ear, my breath stopped, and reason forsook her throne. I was just enabled to venture my soul on Jesus, and saw death staring me in the face. I expected nothing else than dissolution."*

Writing to his sister in reference to this sickness and the state of his mind in prospect of immediate death, he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of all my mercies, I felt no fear. I believe that if I had died it would have been to be forever with the Lord."†

The attack was so violent, the symptoms were so alarming, that little hope was entertained of his recovery. Word to this effect was sent to his father and friends; and when he came to himself he found the room filled, all present expecting to see him expire. Prompt and powerful remedies were used by the physician; but convulsion succeeded convulsion, and "it was not," says his biographer, "until the following morning that the balance which had seemed to weigh life and death against each other perceptibly preponderated on the side of hope."‡

The attack, though severe, was short. After a few days (on Sunday, October 17) he was enabled to rise from his

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 156.

† New Edit. of Life, p. 107.

‡ Large Edit. of Life, p. 157.

bed, but "dreadfully weak and emaciated." Recovering slowly from this time, he continued to improve, until, on Sunday, November 17, he once more resumed his labors in the pulpit.

During this sickness, the love of the people to him, the great estimation in which he was held, was abundantly shown. Public prayer-meetings were held by the society at Cork for his recovery; the brethren assembling separately for this purpose, and also the sisters. As in the case of Peter, "prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him;" the shadow went back, as it were, ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz; and a little longer space, in answer to the *prayer of faith*, was added to the life of this servant of the Most High God.*

During this sickness, the kindness of Mr. Edwards and family was very great. Mr. Summerfield thus speaks of it:—"Throughout the whole the attention of Mr. and Mrs. Edwards was beyond all description; it could not be equalled by any other except by that of Mrs. Cole. Her love to me was wonderful. May the Lord repay them a thousand-fold!"†

Ah! who could see and know him and not love him? His presence in your house was as the sojourn of an angel. There was nothing about him that partook of earth. Was not his presence in a house a little like that of Jesus in the house of Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary at Bethany? His smile, as he made his appearance among

* Equal solicitude was shown in this country, when, in the summer of 1822, Mr. Summerfield was so alarmingly ill in this city, (Philadelphia.)

† Large Edit. of Life, p. 157.

you, was as the flickering and dancing of light among the new and tender foliage of an embowered glade,—the light dancing and flickering from leaf to leaf, from branch to branch,—on one of early summer's beautiful mornings, as you yourself might sit on some rustic bench, with book in hand, under the sunlit glade; such the enlivening influence of the smile and sweet aspect of this lovely disciple of the Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER XIV.

APPOINTED TO CORK, WHILE ON A VISIT TO ENGLAND, BY THE
IRISH CONFERENCE, 1820-21.

HAVING partially recovered his health, he was allowed by his physician to resume his public labors, but was "limited," as he himself tells us, "*to once a week.*" "This," said he, "will not distress me."* .

On Sunday evening, the 7th of November, an immense congregation assembled to hear his first sermon after his recovery, every eye dancing with joy and every heart beating with gladness to see him in the pulpit once more, all happy to receive at his hands the proper food a minister should deal forth to the hungry, and which he calls "the bread of instruction or knowledge." At the close of the evening services, after he had returned home, happy in his God, happy in his work, he said "I felt my soul borne above the world: it soared very high; and I sat with Jesus in heavenly places."†

In the latter part of this month he ventured forth once more, making an excursion to Bandon, which is about twelve miles southwest of Cork, "where he was kindly received and entertained by the governor of the town." After preaching on the Sabbath, he returned to Cork.

* New Edit. of Life, p. 108.

† Large Edit. of Life, p. 157.

About the middle of December he made an excursion to Tralee, on the west coast of Ireland, in sight and hearing of that wide ocean he was to sail so soon; perhaps looking at it, and pondering over in his mind what his father had so often mentioned,—the removal of the family to America.*

He had been invited to preach in behalf of the Methodist missions at Tralee, which he did on Sunday the 19th of December. On Tuesday evening he spoke at great length at the half-yearly meeting of the Bible Society, and on the next evening delivered an address at the Missionary Society; his addresses on both these occasions received with wonted favor.

In this season, also, of comparative leisure, anxious to improve his time and to enlarge his sphere of knowledge, he attended, we are told, lectures on natural, intellectual, and moral philosophy; all his acquisitions laid at the foot of the cross, and made subservient to his great work.

On the first Sabbath morning of the year 1820 (his last year in Ireland) he preached in Cork to a large assembly. Under his first prayer he received a most remarkable manifestation of the divine presence, power, truth, and glory. He seemed like Moses, on this occasion, to have been placed in the cleft of the rock; the Lord God passed by, and his train filled the temple. This is his language:—

“I was peculiarly affected,” says he, “under the first

* On the subject of this removal we have the following entry in his diary, under date of the 31st of January, 1820, (his twenty-third birthday:)—“My father urges me to go to America: he thinks it would greatly improve my health. If I thought it was the will of God, I would not hesitate; but I have no light on this subject.”—*Large Edit. of Life*, p. 167.

prayer. The Lord gave to my eyes refreshing tears, and I could only sob my petition to his throne. He caused all his goodness to pass before me, and revealed to me his name. I felt him passing by. He put his hand on me, and then revealed his glory. He covered me. I was lost in the ocean of his goodness.”*

The remaining part of this winter and the first months of spring were spent preaching, so far as his health and strength would admit, in Cork and its vicinity; also at Fermoy, Limerick, Mallow, and other places,—forming a wide range of appointments, of which Cork was the centre, or, rather, the base.

In the spring of 1820—on the 12th of May—he set out for England, “remaining there till after the Liverpool Conference in July and August following.”

During his absence in England, the Irish Conference sat as usual in the month of July in Dublin; and Mr. Summerfield at this session, being received into the connection, was appointed to the city of Cork for the ensuing Conference year.

Dear as Ireland was to Mr. Summerfield, and closely united as he was to the society in Cork by the most affectionate ties, he was hardly satisfied with this arrangement, though, at the urgent instance of Mr. Tobias, the Irish representative this year to the British Conference, he yielded his own judgment to the wishes of others.†

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 161.

† When in the Irish Channel, sailing from Cork to Bristol, the love of Mr. Summerfield for “the land of his spiritual nativity” thus breaks forth:—
“Farewell, my sweetest friends! Farewell, Ireland! Thou concealest all that I hold dear on earth; yet I give you all up. The cross, but then the crown.

The reason or cause of this visit will be best told in his own words:—

“My public duties in Ireland for the two years previous had greatly impaired, if not totally ruined, my health: this, added to the general humidity of the country, rendered some change necessary if my life was to be preserved. For this purpose among others I visited England in May, 1820, and remained there till after the Liverpool Conference in July and August following.* My hope was, that, through the interference of many of the English preachers with whom in the interval I had become acquainted, I might be removed from Ireland to the air of my own country, and that the change would have a favorable effect upon my constitution, as also that my labors would be greatly reduced,—a measure which my situation at the time imperiously demanded. But, notwithstanding the efforts which were made, and the petition of the Manchester society to be sent to them, the Irish representative, Brother Tobias, refused to give consent to my removal, without which consent the British Conference could do nothing. At the same time, knowing how tender and affecting were the ties by which I was bound to the scene of my past labors, and my *past afflictions too*, he failed not to use every persuasion with me. In this he succeeded too well. I gave up my intention, and returned to Ireland, to the city of Cork, where the

I leave a land of friends: I fly to a land of strangers. ‘Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife!’ It is for Jesus. Farewell! Adieu!’”*

* This entire extract is taken from his own diary, dated Marseilles, February, 1823, and was written with special reference to his removal from the Old World to the New.

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 172.

Conference of the Irish brethren had stationed me, at their preceding session, during my absence in England.”*

In the above extract, written when in France for his health, and in connection with a solemn review of the steps and causes that led to his removal to America, we have presented to us undoubtedly the chief motive or inducement of his visit to England. He wished to be transferred from the Irish to the English Conference, hoping thereby to renew and strengthen his greatly-enfeebled constitution.

But there was another motive, always (after his conversion) a predominating one with Mr. Summerfield:—filial love. His father in the previous autumn had finished his engagement in Cork, and the son was deputed, if possible, to form some new business connection for him in Exeter, (England.) But he did not succeed; and, with that tender love and deep filial regard for his surviving parent which was ever a most prominent trait in his character, he thus alludes to the failure of his hopes:—“My dear father is again disappointed. He thought that the providence of God was removing him to England; but all is closed. I wrote to him the day following, to communicate the unpleasant result, and endeavored to encourage him to trust in the Lord. Indeed, my dear father has no continuing-city here. God in his mercy removes him from place to place, and shows him that *this* is not his home; but he has given him a title through grace to a *kingdom*,—a kingdom which *cannot be moved*.”†

Mr. Summerfield had yet another motive in his visit to England at this time. He thus refers to it:—“I am,” says

* New Edit. of Life, p. 276.

† Large Edit. of Life, p. 175.

he, "like Aquila: I want to know the way of the Lord more perfectly. . . . I long to be in England, where, unknown, I may without reserve communicate my almost indescribable state to some one whom my gracious Lord may direct. Oh, may *He* open my way if it please him!"*

But his plans and purposes were overruled. Instead of remaining unknown in England, on the very evening of the day on which he arrived in Bristol, he providentially supplied a vacant appointment in one of the Methodist chapels, and, thus becoming known, was more or less employed preaching the gospel of the kingdom with great power and acceptance during the whole period of his stay in England.† Yet, in a spiritual sense, he was much

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 168.

† The following narration of this circumstance is given by his biographer:—"Immediately on his arrival at Bristol, as he was passing along one of the streets in the city, he saw a number of children playing at marbles: of these he inquired the way to the Methodist chapel. Thither he repaired, and found that 'a stranger' was expected to preach that evening. Having taken his seat in a pew, he sat, 'unknowing and unknown,' with the rest of the congregation. When they had waited nearly half an hour beyond the time appointed, and no preacher making his appearance, or any person attempting to give out a hymn, the people meantime beginning to go away, it was strongly impressed on Mr. Summerfield's mind that he must himself be the 'stranger' thus providentially appointed. After reasoning a short time with flesh and blood, he at length broke the snare, and inwardly replied, to what he considered a call from God, 'Lord, here am I: not my will, but thine, be done.' He then ascended the pulpit, and, under a sweet sense of the divine presence, gave out the hymn beginning,—

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

blessed during his short, and, on the whole, pleasing, sojourn in his native land. Under date of June 23 he says,—

“Here I have been abundantly blessed. My heart has been sweetly drawn out after the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ, and I believe I can say I feel more truly alive to God, and have nearer access to him, than for some time past.”*

In England, as well as elsewhere, stranger as he was, he found most dear friends. He speaks especially of Mr. Hall’s family, of Bristol:—“Of the kindness of Mr. Hall’s family,” he says, “I cannot speak in any just terms. God bless them!”†

Having, as it would seem, hardly succeeded in any of the objects which brought him to England, (though at the session of the English Conference in Liverpool he formed an acquaintance with the Rev. John (afterward Bishop) Emory, which ultimately proved of great importance in opening his way into the regular itinerant work in this country,) he returned in the course of August to Ireland once more, desirous of fulfilling to the extent of his ability the arduous duties devolving on him by his appointment to

“He felt a little trepidation at first; but in a few minutes this text came into his mind:—‘Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.’

“He preached with his usual freedom and unction; and thus singularly commenced his ministry in England.”*

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 178.

† Ibid.

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 172.

the city of Cork; laboring in word and doctrine, until, in December, with his father and brother and two sisters, Anna and Amelia, he left Ireland forever,—his labors in this the country of his adoption brought thus to a sudden and unexpected termination.

In our next chapter but one we will give his own reasons for this sudden, but, as in the end it surely seemed, providential step.

CHAPTER XV.

SOME FURTHER REFERENCE TO HIS RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

BEFORE we close the account of Mr. Summerfield's labors in Ireland, it will be proper to advert to his religious experience during the first eighteen months of his public ministry, in which he had accomplished so much, preaching in that short space of time no less than *four hundred sermons*.

In speaking of Mr. Summerfield's personal Christian experience, we request our readers to go back with us to the preceding May, (1819,) when he was sick at Waterford. Under date of Waterford, May 29 of this year, we have a letter written to the Rev. Edward Cobain, from which we make the following extract. Having spoken of his sickness, he proceeds as follows:—

“But I feel resigned to the will of my heavenly Father; perhaps he is going to throw me aside as a useless vessel. I know he does not need my poor aid, and I believe I am as willing to *suffer* his will as to *do* it. I only desire Christ Jesus to be magnified by me, and I care not whether it is by my life or in my death. I feel much happier under my affliction than at any other period; my soul is more chastened and heavenly-minded, and I do hope to be a great gainer by it if the Lord see fit to recover me.

"I pant after full conformity to the mind of Jesus. I feel I want the *abiding* witness of the Spirit. I want to arrive at that state when

" 'Not a cloud shall arise
To darken my skies,
Or hide for *one moment*
My Lord from my eyes.'

"I want to know the Spirit of truth, not merely as the *inspiration* of God, but the *influence* of God; not as *breathing upon* the soul, but as *flowing in and through* the heart. I desire him as a well of water *springing up* to eternal life, and thus cleansing from all sin: in short, I wish to experience him as my *sanctifying Lord*, and not merely as my *justifying Savior*. Oh, how great the change! Earnestly do I desire it!—

" 'Restless, resign'd, for this I wait;
For this my *vehement* soul *stands still*.'

"We never discover the glory of our dispensation till the change is wrought in us; and yet how few press after it! Though the Christian church knows the Spirit of truth as being *with* them, yet how few know him as being *in* them!"*

In the following quotation from a sermon preached in Dublin a little before the above was written, we have the same thoughts more fully expanded:—

"This is the first state of a justified believer; the soul is now opened to receive the spring of living water which is to throw off the waters of impurity and to cleanse the heart;

* New Edit. of Life, p. 92.

it rises at first by slow degrees, but the recipient is a worker together with God, believing and receiving all the aid of the power of God working in him mightily. Exulting in new powers, he feels the Spirit of God now as a *sanctifier*; he knows him not now in his transient operations, first moving upon his soul as the inspiration of God, but as the influence of God; not breathing upon, but flowing in and through, his heart. The communion of this nether spring being kept up with the upper fountain, as he receives the full truth in the love thereof, he is made fully free, and 'out of his belly flow rivers of living water:' now his experience is, that the blood of Jesus Christ momentarily cleanses him from sin, and Christ dwells in that heart by faith. He has now his fruit unto holiness, for his conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God. This is a mystery which the wise men of this world know not: it is spiritually discerned; for this mystery of faith is only kept up in a pure conscience, in one who is full fraught with Christ in a pure believing heart; and, though many an obstacle or mound may be raised up by the world or the devil, to divert the course of the tide of divine feeling, yet, as it partakes of the nature of the upper fountain, it bears down all before it; and it will also find its way back to that Deity from whence it issued, and be one with Christ as Christ is one with God."*

There are various other passages to the same purport as the above, some of which we will also quote.

After his recovery from his alarming sickness in the fall of 1819, (which we have spoken of,) having read the life of

* Sermons, pp. 84, 85.

that holy man of God, the Rev. John Fletcher, he makes the following remarks:—

“Oh, what a saint! I would, but scarcely dare, aspire to his attainments. And yet Jesus kindly whispers to my inward ear that he has the residue of the Spirit.” And in another place, in reference to the same person, he says, “I never met with any experience so much a counterpart of my own: I mean his experience just at the eve of stepping into gospel liberty. I took courage; I kneeled down; I cried to God. I set the seal of my faith to his promises of pardon [full salvation]* through the death of his Son; I now wait the seal of his Spirit to be applied to my heart. Lord, I must, I must believe now.”

In the beginning of February, (1820,) his biographer informs us, that “so deeply and steadily flowed the rivers of peace and blessedness from the throne of God into his soul, that he writes,—

“‘If all my days were spent in as close communion with God as these were, methinks the change which death would introduce would scarcely be felt. I find I *can* trust my Father for all things. I *can* cast my soul on his promise, made through the blood of Jesus, even though the seal of the Spirit should seem long delayed. I know and sensibly feel that I am not worthy to be a son of God; and if he see fit, for wise purposes, to retain me so long in the character of a *servant*, his will be done. I have prayed, with the prodigal, “Make me as one of thy hired servants:” this he

* Mr. Summerfield was now seeking to know God, not as his *justifying Savior*, but as his *sanctifying Lord*. See his own language, just quoted, in his letter to the Rev. Edward Cobain.

has exceeded; he has made me a *domestic*. He *will* then increase in me all the good pleasure of his will. He *will* yet set me on high, even among the princes of his people.' '*

The simple conclusion is, that Mr. Summerfield had been earnestly seeking, through the whole year, to use his own language, "after a full conformity to the mind of Jesus;" and, if he had not attained thereto, (and surely few will be inclined to think any thing was lacking, save, to use again his own words, "the *abiding* witness of the Spirit,") he was still seeking, with every power of his soul, "to know the Spirit of truth as a well of water springing up to eternal life, and thus cleansing from *all* sin."

Having thus noticed the general state and tendency of his Christian experience, we will make some reference to its occasional fluctuations or variations during this same period.

Here is a passage, written hardly a month after the letter to Mr. Cobain, the one so diverse from the other as hardly to seem to proceed from the same hand:—

"June 17, [1819.]—My soul was more strongly led out after God this morning than of late. Oh that I knew where I might find him! I view myself as the most abandoned of all sinners. I am tempted to wish that I was openly profane, as being in a more likely way to obtain the salvation of God than in my present state. I know not what to do. Lord, pity me in my low estate! Oh, make thyself known unto me!"†

We have another entry, somewhat similar to the above,

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 165.

† Ibid. p. 152.

under date of the 31st of January, 1820, his twenty-third birthday. It is to this effect:—

“But what shall I say of myself? Despair begins to lay hold on me; and for some time I have left off prayer. My hell increases; and yet sometimes I have a beam of hope. In the instances I have mentioned above,” (speaking of certain conversions that had taken place under his ministry the day before,) “it seemed as if the Lord mingled encouragement amid my despondencies, and he seems unwilling to give me up. Oh that I knew where I might find him!”*

These passages will serve to show what deep gloom *occasionally* brooded over his mind, amid, for the most part, resplendent light. The expressions are strong, it is true; but they form no sufficient data to judge unfavorably of his state. These gloomy moments and foreboding seasons were of short stay; they were little more than the passing of a dark cloud over the bright shining of the sun at noonday.

Under the pressure of sickness, of great bodily infirmity, of heaviness through manifold trials, of *perhaps* a remarkably fine and delicate nervous organization, he would occasionally speak of himself in a tone of despondency for which, if questioned, he could have assigned no valid reasons,—forming conclusions respecting himself which every breathing of his soul, every aspiration of his heart, every *act* of his life, contradicted.

The conclusions of his biographer on this point appear to us so just and sound, that we insert them, and with these remarks close this chapter:—

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 163.

"It is difficult," he remarks, "to avoid yielding to a conviction, on the whole, that much of Mr. Summerfield's misery arose from bodily disease, some probably from Satanic temptations, and (more than either, and overruling both the former for his good eventually) from the striving of God's Holy Spirit with *his* spirit, to bring him, by a necessarily severe discipline, to an entire surrender of himself to the Lord; for, followed, and admired, and flattered as no doubt he was, young, inexperienced, and sanguine, there was continual peril of his being a castaway after preaching to others, because there was continual temptation to preach himself as well as Christ Jesus the Lord, and to glory in his talents as well as in the cross."*

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 164.

That the reader may see with what splendor, with what bright, unclouded lustre, the Sun of righteousness at times shone forth on this devoted servant of God, we make the following extract from a letter written to Francis Hall, Esq., of New York; written soon after his arrival in France, and dated Marseilles, 6th February, 1823:—

"I think I never experienced more settled peace of mind than during that time, [his voyage;] and it was as *permanent* as it was *perfect*; like that steady sunshine of which Mr. Wesley sings, when

"Not a cloud doth arise to darken the skies,
Or hide for one moment my Lord from my eyes."

I was a wonder to myself; the word of the Lord seemed sealed upon my heart:—'Thou wilt keep him in *perfect peace* whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.' I had not a moment's *uneasiness* concerning the happy termination of our voyage. I felt that Jesus was with me in my little state-room 'in the hinder part of the ship;' and, partially confined to it as I was, by reason of the weather, I found by experience that

"Prisons can palaces prove,
If Jesus but dwells with me there."*

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 229.

CHAPTER XVI.

LEAVES IRELAND—ARRIVES IN NEW YORK.

At the close of our fourteenth chapter, we spoke in general terms of the departure of Mr. Summerfield for New York. The departure was sudden, and, *at the time*, unlooked for either by himself or his friends.

The reasons or causes of his departure at this time, with the suddenness thereof, he has himself given us; and we transcribe his own words:—

“Circumstances of various kinds, and a strange coincidence of events which could only be resolved into the leadings of a providential hand, fully confirmed, in my dear and honored father, a conviction he had long experienced, that America was henceforward to become our home. My eldest sister’s having married and removed to that country, several years before, had always since that time been regarded by him as an earnest, or rather a *pledge*, that the removal of the whole family would succeed sooner or later.

“Having in the autumn of 1820 finished his engagement as the manager of a certain establishment in the city of Cork, and finding no opening into which he might enter in that city, and thereby provide things honest in the sight of all men, although he sought for it with all diligence, connected with incessant prayer by night and day, he

paused, and began to consider *this* as the time to which he had so long looked forward. Having exercised the strictest economy over all his domestic concerns since his engagement in that city, and thereby recruited his impoverished circumstances, he now found that he was possessed of the means, and but *barely the means*, of transporting us to the United States; and, fearing that these means would so consume away by much procrastination as to render it impracticable, perhaps, during the remainder of his life, he immediately concluded, after *agonizing* prayer to the Father of lights to direct him, to prepare to quit his native land. A vessel having put into the port of Cork by stress of weather, presented an opportunity which seldom occurs there. As the place of her destination was the residence of my brother and sister in America, we regarded it as the last preparatory step by which the kind providence of God had led us on. Preliminaries adjusted, we bade adieu to Ireland and to Europe on the 12th of December, 1820, and arrived in New York on the 17th of March following, having first sailed to Portugal to take in cargo. . . .

“As regards myself, independent of a father’s commands which were laid upon me, I too regarded the connection of preceding events which transpired in my ministerial labors as no other than the leadings of the same God who

“ ‘Plants his footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.’ ”*

In addition to the above, we have a letter, dated Runcorn, near Liverpool, February 10, 1824, (written at the time he

* New Edit. of Life, pp. 274, 275.

was in England for his health,) to his old class-leader, the Rev. Patrick French, then a Wesleyan missionary in the island of Antigua, in the West Indies, in which also he speaks of his sudden and unexpected departure from Ireland. We give to our readers the following extract from this letter:—

“Although I have been in England ever since the month of May last, I have not been able to visit Ireland. I thought I perceived an unwillingness on the part of the Irish preachers; indeed, I scarcely think they have *from their hearts* forgiven me for leaving them: but the authority of a parent, and that a *pious* one, compelled the change, and I am now *satisfied* that the good hand of my God was with me. He has prospered me in America, above all that I could have asked or thought; but I dare not trust my own heart to enter into particulars: ‘the day shall declare it.’ In reference, however, to my much-loved Ireland, I am now quite relieved by two letters I have received within the last week from my *best friend* in all that country,—my dear *William Stewart*. I only regret that I cannot now accept his invitation to come and receive at the mouths of many the welcome of their ‘inside hearts,’ as he calls it. But, alas! with all this there is mingled the intelligence that Brother Steele is gone to his reward. Oh that we may ever stand with our loins girded up, ready to follow the Bridegroom whenever he appeareth!”*

It must be evident to every dispassionate and reflecting mind that Mr. Summerfield, in the exercise of his ministry in Ireland, thought only of approving himself as unto God

* New Edit. of Life, pp. 228, 229.

and not as unto man. Even the Methodist itinerancy in the island offers far less worldly inducements than either this country or England. Dr. Fisk, in his remarks on Methodism in Ireland, says that but few advantages are held out in this country for young men to enter the ministry; that such labor under great disadvantages; and that in most cases Methodist parents encourage their children to enter the Established Church, and manifest much joy when such is the case. As the consequence of this, he says, they who join the Irish Conference are usually a self-sacrificing, laborious, and often a suffering, body of men.*

Nor is this all. It would seem that, notwithstanding the English Conference sends one of its leading members to preside annually at the Irish Conference, there is not that reciprocity between the English and Irish preachers which might be expected. At the district-meeting held at Exeter (England) at the time Mr. Summerfield visited that place on some business for his father, we are told that one of the English preachers present on that occasion said, "Be cautious how you mix with the Irish brethren." It is true Mr. Summerfield was invited to speak at the anniversary of the Missionary Society, held in connection with the district-meeting; yet so "very shy" were the preachers, that he was not invited to preach in any of their pulpits; and it was not until, "at the kind solicitation of Mr. Kilpin, the Baptist minister, he had preached for him in his meeting-house,"† that a Methodist chapel was opened to him, and then the request was made not by the superin-

* See "Fisk's Travels." We do not use the doctor's words: we write from memory.

† Large Edit. of Life, p. 175.

tendent of the circuit, but by Mr. Overton, the junior preacher.*

In addition to all this, when Mr. Summerfield was in the full blaze of his popularity in Ireland, and high and low, rich and poor, hung entranced on his lips, the whole society from one end of the land to the other, as we have seen, was torn by faction, and greatly weakened and impoverished by the withdrawal or expulsion of its oldest, most influential and wealthy members, and dark and heavy was the cloud that rested upon it. In consequence of the loss of so large a proportion of its wealthy members, the preachers were called upon to submit to numerous deprivations, and the financial burden of the old society was greatly increased. It was indeed a day of trial and of deep gloom, and of great difficulty and embarrassment, for the Methodist body in Ireland.

Mr. Summerfield was ignorant of none of these facts; neither could he have been ignorant, from *the very first sermon* he preached in Cork, of his popularity, or of the high position in which he was soon placed by his unrivalled pulpit-powers. But what of this? Like Moses, having respect to the recompense of reward, he preferred to cast in his lot with a poor, contemned, and suffering people; and he did so. Thinking nothing of his own ease, emolument, or honor, desiring only to live to the glory of God, to live not to *himself*, but to *Him* who loved him and gave himself for him, he joyfully endured the loss of all earthly good, knowing that he had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 175.

He was young; he had an imagination touched almost with a prophetic glow, and the world spread its charms to tempt his feet to stray as well as others; but, turning away from the scene of bewildering enchantment, he took the cross and the shame of Jesus in lieu thereof,—going forth, in the beauty of his youth and the resplendency of his all-but-unearthly genius, without the camp, joyfully bearing the reproach and marks of his “much-loved” Master.

Neither must we suppose that naught but roses were strewn in his path. He was not without his trials even among his brethren, yea, even among his own brethren. Read the following paragraph from his diary, “upon the latter clause of which,” says his biographer, “we must drop a tear; but there exists no valid reason for suppressing it:”—

“In the various circuits I have travelled I have met with many trials. Many of the preachers received me gladly. I believe I was beloved by those I most highly prize; and in this page and in this number I would record names ever dear to me:—Tobias, Wood, Steele, W. Stewart, A. Hamilton, Sen., T. W. Doolittle, H. Dury, S. Harpur, E. Cobain, F. Russel, P. Rogers, J. Mathews, &c. Others I found among my brother preachers who received me with—not coolness or reserve, (this I care nothing about,) but—marked dislike. They would rather, I do really believe, that I were *cut off* than preserved among them. I know them; God knows them. I love them truly, and would be glad to be their lowliest servant in any capacity.”†

But nothing moved him. His love to Wesleyan-Me-

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 171.

† Ibid.

thodism was indeed great. He loved her doctrine, her discipline, her economy. He loved her love-feasts and her class-meetings. He loved the name of Wesley; he venerated this honored name. He thought the most ample provision had been made in Mr. Wesley's discipline and doctrine for the growth of scriptural holiness; and this was the beacon shining from afar which guided his course and kept his heart so firmly knit and fixed to the people with whom in the beginning he had first cast his lot.

The love of Ruth to Naomi was not stronger than that of Mr. Summerfield to the church of his early choice; and no trials from *within* or inducements from *without* ever led him for an instant to waver in his mind. He was not in this respect, any more than in his unwavering, always increasing, love to God, guilty of any inconstancy. He held the profession of his attachment to Methodism, as well as to his God, faithful unto the end.

He is leaving Cork now, it is true; but the hand that guided the first great voyager across the same watery deep is here also: it is the same hand, the same divine finger and guidance. He is conscious of no motive in the step he has taken, in the change that has occurred, other than the glory of God. He believes that he is led in this direction by the Spirit and providence of God; and the result will show that his filial obedience in this trying hour was overruled for great good.

There is a voice calling to him from this unknown, distant shore; there are spirits, immortal spirits, even now in a process of spiritual training and discipline to receive from him the engrafted word; he is on his way thither, bearing precious seed; the soil is prepared, the furrow is turned,

the sower, the all-but-angel-sower, is here. Ah! he steps from the vessel—the good ship “General Logan”—with his scrip filled with golden seed,—the good seed of the kingdom,—with the words of eternal life. The angel of the Irish churches is among us; but his step is so soft and still that scarce the faintest tread is heard. Yet soon will he speak with that trumpet-voice which awakes the dead and bids the sleeper rise. Sinners asleep even now in their sins will start up with sudden, dread surprise, and the cry, the loud, startling cry, from their hitherto-sealed lips, will be, “What shall we do to be saved? How shall we flee from the wrath to come? How escape the second death, the wrath that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, the destruction that consumeth forever?”

CHAPTER XVII.

HIS SPEECH AT THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

THE voyage had been a long one,—a little over three months,—occasioned by the vessel touching at St. Ubes, a Portuguese harbor about fifteen miles south of Lisbon, to take in a cargo of salt. But the rest of the long voyage was highly desirable and needful to his worn and tired frame. The “breezes of the Atlantic” were beneficial; and, recruited a little in health, invigorated somewhat in mind and body, Mr. Summerfield landed safely at New York, March 17, 1821, in company with his father, brother, and two younger sisters,—all strangers on a foreign strand.*

But a home was provided for them all in the house of his brother-in-law, residing at that time in Brooklyn.† Now Mr. Summerfield experienced what he had written of to his eldest sister, nearly two years before, under date of April 19, 1819:—

“I often tell my friends in this country of my desire of going to America: they will not listen to it for a moment. I do indeed desire it *if it were the Lord's will*, but not other-

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 189.

† Mr. James Blackstock, who married Ellen, the eldest sister of Mr Summerfield.

wise. I long to see you, that I may be *filled* with your company. If it is *His* will, *He* will open the way.”*

Mr. Summerfield had not been long in this country before he was invited to preach in John Street Church, then newly rebuilt; on which occasion he preached from one of his most favorite texts, Luke xii. 31:—“But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.” This sermon was not in vain. Among those present was one who, then “a young girl, hung upon his words with breathless interest;” and who says of Mr. Summerfield that he could adopt toward her the words of an inspired apostle:—“Through Christ Jesus I have begotten you in the gospel.” Of this first sermon this lady says, it “had an electrical effect; but it is not for me to depict his triumphs and his sway. He did indeed sway his congregation at will.”†

At this time hardly a whisper of his great power had reached our shores. Perhaps to no one save the Rev. Daniel Hitt—who was then tarrying for a space at Mr. Carter’s, (Mr. Carter and his wife both from Ireland,)—was his name known, and the fame of his eloquence; and he was by no means disposed to gratify the rather eager curiosity of his hospitable entertainers; so that when Mr. Summerfield first preached in John Street, it was as the sudden bursting of the sun from behind a thick and heavy cloud; while to those who have since heard the same discourse, (and it was one often chosen by him,) it is hardly necessary to say it was one of the most finished specimens of pulpit eloquence

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 179.

† “Letter from a Lady,” New Edit. of Life, p. 323.

that ever fell even from his lips; always enchaining, nay, entrancing, his auditory.

It is Dr. Bethune's opinion—and we suppose that he is correct—that this was the only sermon preached by Mr. Summerfield previous to his appearance on the platform of the American Bible Society.* The extraordinary talents displayed in that sermon, the “electrical effect” then produced, *probably* led to the invitation to speak at the forthcoming anniversary of the Bible Society; and, though we do not know that such was the case, we should not be surprised if it was through the intervention of Francis Hall, Esq., of New York, that his name and wonderful talents became known to the gentlemen whose duty it was to make the necessary arrangements for the annual celebration of this important public institution.†

The fifth anniversary of the American Bible Society—then, says Dr. Bethune, “an infant institution”—was held on the 10th of May, 1821, in the large assembly-room of the City Hotel, and was very numerously attended. A more fitting stage for such a *spirit* and for the display of his inimitable eloquence could not have been found; and one

* Rev. George W. Bethune's “Recollections of Summerfield,” New Edit. of *Life*, p. 315.

† Of Mr. Hall, (the owner and proprietor of the “New York Commercial Advertiser,”) Mr. Summerfield, writing to him from Marseilles, 6th February, 1823, says, “Among this crowd,” (he had been speaking of his numerous friends raised up by God in America,)—“among this crowd my dear Brother Hall holds no *second* place; and it is only in acknowledgment of a vast debt of gratitude which I can but *confess*, but never *pay*, that I write to him by the first conveyance this country has presented me with, in a vessel bound to Boston.”*

* New Edit. of *Life*, p. 172.

cannot but see the hand of God in affording his young servant such an opportunity to make known the savor of the name of Christ through him, and to give to sectarianism the first most formidable blow it had as yet received in this country. All truly evangelical denominations are represented on this platform; and here was one who, fully imbued with the spirit of his divine Lord and Master, with his passion and death, glorying only in Christ and him crucified, knowing of no salvation, having no dependence, other than that which is received by and through *simple faith* in the merits and righteousness of Christ, as the representative of Methodist evangelism, made prejudice cower, leading perhaps for the first time many an opposing mind to think more favorably of a sect that was yet much spoken against, and the name whereof was then held in no small disrepute; for, whatsoever *advance* Methodism may since have made in public favor, thirty-five years ago the question could well have been asked, "By whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small."

According to the account of one who was present on the occasion, the exercises, owing to the great length of the report and the addresses, had been protracted many hours, and much uneasiness and restlessness—the effect of weariness—had begun to show itself ere Mr. Summerfield, the last speaker on the list, rose to address the assembly.*

The address of the speaker immediately preceding Mr. Summerfield had been not a little prolix, however excellent

* Marinus Willett, M.D. See "Recollections of Summerfield," New Edit. of Life, p. 292.

it may have been in itself; and we have the assurance of Dr. Bethune that it "was truly a master-piece,—profound in argument, accurate in logical analysis, and very impressive in its conclusions."* But whatever praise this address may have merited on the score of scholarship, it was assuredly, on the whole, dry, dull, and tedious; and with the audience generally "strong symptoms of weariness" were plainly manifested.

At this moment the chair announced the "Rev. Mr. Summerfield, from England."

A clerical gentleman (who has since gone to his rest) who was sitting by Dr. Bethune, and had been highly pleased with the elaborate address that had just been delivered, noticing the youthful appearance of the stranger from England, with perhaps his pale and delicate face, said, with decided reprobation, "What presumption!—a boy like that to be set up against a giant!"†

As Mr. Summerfield rose to speak, the clergyman who had preceded him, possibly unconscious in a measure of the time he had himself occupied, in an undertone suggested to him "not to speak long;" which led to a happy and rather facetious reply from his youthful brother-speaker, and at once lit up the face of the whole assembly with an enlivening smile.

There was no weariness from that instant. As he rose to speak, every eye was riveted on him; so lovely, so interesting, was the appearance of this stranger from a foreign shore. Not long had he spoken, when "the first burst of

* Dr. Bethune's "Recollections of Summerfield," New Edit. of Life, p. 315.

† Ibid.

eloquence" broke from his lips; in a little while another followed, which raised the audience from their seats; soon a third electrical flash of soul-stirring eloquence burst from the surcharged cloud which, like that raised by Judea's prophet on Carmel's flowery top, had so suddenly arisen; and instantly there followed—what had never happened *on any similar occasion*—"loud and universal applause."*

Dr. Bethune says he thus alluded to Elias Boudinot, LL.D., the President of the Society, (then in the eighty-second year of his age,) but who, on account of the infirmity of age, had been compelled to leave the platform:—"His motion," he says, "was one of thanks to the officers of the Society for their labors during the year; and of course he had to allude to the President, then reposing in another part of the house; and thus he did it:—

"‘When I saw that venerable man, too aged to warrant the hope of being with you at another anniversary, *he reminded me of Jacob leaning upon the top of his staff, blessing his children before he departed.*’"†

* "Recollections of Summerfield," by Marinus Willett, M.D., New Edit. of Life, p. 292.

† Dr. Bethune's "Recollections of Summerfield," New Edit. of Life, p. 315.

A fuller report of this part of the celebrated speech is as follows:—"In seconding the motion of thanks to the venerable President, I am assured of the consentaneous feeling of every heart around me. When I beheld him enter the room, I felt a thrill strike through my soul, but which I cannot describe. I believe it was the generous throb of every individual here present at the sight of BOUDINOT; it was sympathetic, and every heart vibrated in perfect unison with my own. My imagination involuntarily recognised in him a resemblance to pious Jacob; and, 'finding the time draw near when he must die,' I fancied that he said in his heart, 'Gather yourselves together, that I may bless you before I die.' And when one told Jacob, and said, 'Behold, thy sons

"He then passed on," says Dr. Bethune, "to encourage the Society by the example of the British institution:—

"‘When we first launched our untried vessel upon the deep, the storms of opposition roared, and the waves dashed angrily around us, and we had hard work to keep her head to the wind. We were faint with rowing, and our strength would soon have been gone; but we cried, ‘Lord, save us, or we perish.’”

"‘When a light shone upon the waters, and we saw a form walking on the troubled sea, like unto that of the Son of God, and he drew near the ship, and we knew that it was Jesus; and he stepped upon the deck and laid his hand on the helm, and he said unto the winds and the waves, ‘Peace, be still;’ and there was a great calm. Let not the friends of the Bible fear; God is in the midst of us. God shall help us, and that right early.’”

By this time a great change had taken place in Dr. Bethune’s critical neighbor and friend; his prejudices had melted away as frost before the fire, or as the pearly dew-drop before the morning sun. "Wonderful!" was his language, as in sweet surprise he listens. "Wonderful!" "He talks," he further added, "like an angel from heaven."*

In the course of this famous Bible speech, which produced so great an impression, and which opened unto him so wide and effectual a door of utterance in this country among all

come unto thee,' Israel 'strengthened himself and sat upon the bed,' and said, 'Hear, ye sons of Jacob, and hearken unto Israel your father.' ".*

Dr. Bethune's "Recollections of Summerfield," New Edit. of Life, p. 316.

sects and denominations, speaking of the prospects of the Bible cause, and the hopes its dawning triumphs seemed then to open to the world after so long a period of apathy and darkness, he quoted the following well-known lines, the effect of which, those who have heard him read or repeat poetry can well conceive of:—

“The dwellers in the vale and on the rocks
Shout to each other; and the mountain-tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy;
Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosannah round.”

We have thus far alluded only to what was poetical and rhetorical in this speech: this was but the foliage of the tree. In the following extract we perceive some of its more solid and substantial properties, wherein he mentions and refutes some of the objections brought against Bible Societies, in common with every thing else that is good that truly and properly grows out of vital, heartfelt, experimental Christianity:—

“But the enemies of the cause object to us, that ostentation, a parade of piety, originated and continues Bible societies. Alas, sir, Bible Christianity in every form must obtain the reproach of this world in our *enlightened* age. If the inward feelings and comforts of the gospel are professed, the profession is resolved into enthusiasm; on the other hand, if a cordial zeal to advance the interests of Christianity express itself in the most unexceptionable way, even the putting of God’s word into the hands of sinful man, this humble and ardent zeal is reproached as fanatical pride. Thus, *inward* religion is *enthusiasm*, and *outward* reli-

gion is *fanaticism*; and, by a modern species of fashionable scandal, men, having denied 'the *power* of godliness,' decry the very *form* thereof. 'To what shall we liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.' There is no pleasing such characters in any way; 'but wisdom is justified of her children.'

"But objections to Bible societies are now too late; we have swallowed the camel, and shall we strain at the gnat? Our opponents will never be able either to suppress the efforts or impede the progress of Bible societies. Sooner may they arrest the sun at the antipodes, and prevent his rising to illuminate our horizon; sooner may they confine the winds in the cave of *Æolus*, never again to cool and refresh our atmosphere; sooner may they stem the mighty stream that laves the mountain's sides, and interdict its progress to the ocean. Yes, the word of God shall accomplish that which he pleases; it shall prosper in the thing whereunto he has sent it; the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea: the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."*

This day, with his appearance on the platform of the American Bible Society, constituted an epoch, and a most important one, in Mr. Summerfield's life. Speaking of it, or, rather, writing of it, afterward, in connection with the fourth anniversary of the Protestant Bible Society of France, (to which he had been deputed,) he is led to refer

* New Edit. of Life, p. 126.

indirectly, and by way of comparison, to the happy results of his Bible speech at this time. After speaking of the commission with which he had been honored as delegate, and the "many honors" it procured for him in Paris, he says,—

"For a moment I fancied myself in New York, and could not but dwell upon the similarity of my situation when I first addressed the Bible Society there and my present. I remembered that I had just arrived, a stranger in a strange land, unknowing and unknown; and yet from that very hour what friendships did not the providence of God lead me to form,—friendships which will run parallel with the day of eternity!"*

Friendships indeed! This was but a small part. From that hour what a door of usefulness was opened to him!—how wide and effectual a door!—and how many immortal souls, saved from endless misery, saved from sin and Satan's power, will bless God throughout eternity that they ever heard the doctrine of a present, full salvation, received by *faith*, proclaimed by this good minister and faithful servant of the Lord Jesus! The floodgate was then lifted, and in one unceasing, full-flowing stream his heaven-inspired eloquence poured itself forth, paying little regard to sectional peculiarities and distinctive denominational characteristics; this ambassador from heaven knowing but one shibboleth, loving alike all that loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

On the evening of this day the writer of this memoir first

* Extract from a letter to Marinus Willett, M.D., addressed to him just before Mr. Summerfield quitted Paris.

heard the name of Summerfield. Among those present at the Bible Society was the widow of a clergyman of the Associate Dutch Reformed Church of the city of New York. Though a woman not easily moved, of a temperament rather phlegmatic and cold than warm and fanciful, (but of excellent sense,) and of strong denominational predilections, yet deeply had she been moved by what she had heard. The eloquence of Summerfield was even to her as the descending of the angel to trouble the waters; and she spoke of him in the highest terms, with the warmest expressions of admiration; at the same time saying that on the following Sabbath morning he would preach in the Methodist church, Duane Street.

Thus did his words penetrate *in limine* of this house, to the hearthstone of this threshold, and, no doubt, to many another hearth; and great was the desire awakened in many hearts to hear further from lips so touched,—lips kindling (as you would be led to think from what you heard) with all but celestial fire.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SERMON IN DUANE STREET CHURCH.

WHAT is more evanescent than human life? The years that have intervened since what we are about to describe occurred have been many; but how slight the trace they have left!—with what a rapid rush have they brought us to the point we have now reached!

Do our eyes grow watery?—does a film overspread them? It is not so much at the sad and tender recollection of the past, as for grief that they have carried along with them so poor an account to the Arbiter of our destiny, the great Judge of the living and the dead. Ah! it is not that so many of the years of our life are gone that these tears dim our eyes, as that e'er our feet faltered in the heavenly race, or our pinion drooped in our eagle-flight to the realms of everlasting blessedness.

Not the speck of a cloud covers the heart of the sanctified, ever-rejoicing believer, as the weird sisters cut first one thread, and then another, and yet again another, in the mixed skein of human life. Years are but as so many milestones in their progress,—stages in their journey; and, this one numbered and that *point* passed, they find themselves, with each revolving cycle of time, nearer and yet nearer their heavenly home. “The sting of death is sin,

and the strength of sin is the law ;” but, by believing in Jesus, the law becomes powerless,—losing entirely its stern and iron grasp of us,—for it is perfectly fulfilled ;* and death is as though it were not, being swallowed up in victory by the extraction and deliverance of *all* sin from the soul, agreeably to that saying of Jesus:—“He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

The Sabbath has come,—the 14th day of May, 1821. The whispering winds have carried the tale of the *new star* that has arisen in our hemisphere ; and wakeful hearts,—hearts troubled and anxious with some secret, untold sorrow,—hearts all-but-unconsciously “weary and heavy-laden,”—like the magi of old, ponder within themselves what this brilliant light in the heavenly galaxy may mean, wishfully hoping that it may lead their troubled minds to some source or place of rest and hope. Perhaps, as in the case of the wise men from the East, some divine messenger, some secret inward monitor, some invisible hand, was preparing the way for the discovery of Bethlehem’s babe to them, for the full rising upon their souls of Israel’s star,—the long-promised and anxiously-waited-for star of Israel.

The morning was misty and lowering. For some time, however, before the accustomed hour, the congregation began to assemble ; many a strange face seen now for the first time in Duane Street Church. Great eagerness and curiosity were depicted in the faces of the new-comers, which, with the difference of a certain air or manner, and

* The words of Jesus to John, his forerunner, at his baptism, will serve as a comment here:—“Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”
MATT. iii. 15.

dress, contrasted strongly with the quiet and subdued look, plain attire, and general appearance of those who usually worshipped in this plain and humble sanctuary. Somewhat rapidly but silently the house filled, till every seat was occupied both above and below, though the congregation, on the whole, was not so large as had been anticipated.

The entrance of him whose name now for the first time began to be heard among us was looked for with great eagerness; when, as was ever the case, punctual *to the instant*, he was seen walking up the left aisle,—his father having entered the church a short time before and taken his seat within the altar,* immediately under the pulpit. What shall we say? He moved as if he were wholly absorbed in God; for at the first sight it seemed as if you saw one who did not belong to this earth.

The first passing glance showed a face so unearthly, so heavenly, so divine, as you might imagine that of Lazarus when he stepped forth from the tomb, the pallid hue of death not wholly departed, only slightly relieved with the first faint tinge and blush of returning life. His unearthly but lovely appearance, as he moved up the aisle as with the tread of an angel, and scattering odors around, even “as one coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant,” might not unfitly be likened to the light and bloom of immortality emerging from the dark precincts of the grave,—the lustre of eternity playing about and illumining the gaping mouth of the cold sepulchre; such the seal so legibly engraven—the mark of his apostle-

* The Rev. J. N. Maffit on this occasion also occupied a seat within the altar.

ship—on this true legate, herald, and ambassador from the skies.

With how perfect a grace he moves! There was grace, harmony, poetry, eloquence, music, in his step, in the perfect symmetry of his slight and delicate form, in his every movement. But there was no more the appearance of a consciousness of all this than in the artless song of a bird or the leaf of a pale and delicate flower. All intent was he on the message he had that morning to deliver; and, as he moved up the aisle toward the pulpit,—every eye fastened upon him,—neither to the right nor to the left did he look; but it was as if the cross on Calvary's rugged brow stood all unveiled before him in the cloudless azure of that Eastern clime, his steady gaze concentrated on that and that alone; all else forgotten. He kneels; but you feel—in your inmost heart you feel—it is the prostration of the soul, not of the knee; that this simple act is not one of mere form: you feel as if, like Isaac, the sacrifice is bound to the altar not for vain show, not as if acting a part, but to be immolated thereon, self-forgotten, and life itself cheerfully relinquished (as in the case of the son of the aged patriarch) *by* the command and for the *glory* of God. The whole congregation feel the impression which but a casual glance produces, and are sensibly moved from the first; prepared to listen to one whose appearance, so lovely, so divine, suggests the idea rather of a celestial than an earthly messenger.

But as he rises to give out the hymn, and his eye lights up from the inspiration within,—as that voice, so low, so distinct in its enunciation, so full of melody, so rich and varied in its tones, rises and falls on the ear like the music

of the spheres,—as verse follows verse, each verse spoken as if some new chord were struck to which the heart gives back quick, responsive answer,—how soon were all eyes and hearts fastened on him, curiosity rapidly giving way to stronger, higher, deeper emotions! What a spell was cast, what a web insensibly woven, round the congregation! It was as if the scene of the burning bush in the wilderness were renewed, the world for the time wholly shut out, and naught thought of but the amazing spectacle of a bush on fire yet not in the least consumed by the all-devouring, raging flame. All present were spellbound and enchained with the very first notes struck by one who, like David, touched his lyre by the inspiration of the Almighty.

The deeply-sad yet sweet solemnity of his face as he first stood up in the pulpit, with his hymn-book in his hand, to give out the hymn, (the practice then to line the hymn for the use of the congregation,—two lines or three, according to the metre, each time,) seems pictured on the mirror of our soul to this day. But we must not associate gloom therewith: only the unutterable yearning of his soul, his inexpressible solicitude for the salvation of those to whom he preached all the words of this life, his fearful apprehension lest their steps should take hold on death and they fall into the pit of remediless woe,—all this spiritual solicitude and anxiety painted itself on his face, and was expressed by a sweet solemnity and tender sadness:—as we suppose the face of Jesus wore when, beholding Jerusalem and contemplating her appalling destiny, he wept over it, and said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto

thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"*

The burden of souls is on his heart,—his anxious, troubled, pained heart. On no common errand does he now stand "in the holy place;" no common theme fires his heart or touches his lips as with a live coal from off the altar. From his closet he has come forth, with groanings which cannot be uttered, with secret sighs and tears innumerable; thus he stands up before the people. Seeing the sword coming and the avenging blow about to fall, he warns the sinner of his impending danger, not as a tale oft told, not as an old wife's fable, but as one who had seen the unquenchable flame, who had heard the groans of the damned and listened to the hopeless wailing of those tormented in the undying flame. He is here not to perjure his soul, not vainly to reiterate the alarm-cry put in the mouth of the watchman on the walls of Zion:—"The soul that sinneth it shall die;" while in his heart he smiles at the vain fancy; but because every drop of the crimson tide that pours itself through his veins, every pulsation of his heart, every feeling of his soul, respond to the truth of the solemn and awful warnings of future wrath contained in God's most holy word. It is not his province to speculate on these truths, to weaken, to disguise, or to pervert them, but to take the word of God as he finds it, with its promises and threatenings both alike plainly written and clearly revealed; and, if he allure with the one, with equal fidelity not to withhold the other, seeking to deliver his

* Matt. xxiii. 37.

own soul, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear.

Can you wonder he trembles?—that his knees smite together?—that, like Samson going to battle single-handed against the Philistines, he seeks help, he cries out for assistance, he implores aid, with many groans and tears, from the God of battles? The issues of eternity hang on this hour. It is not simply, as with Israel's strong-armed champion, the deliverance of his people from temporal ill or the domination of their mortal foes; but the issue is for eternity; while, as to himself, as an ambassador for God, as the prophet of the Most High, called to stand between the living and the dead, shall he see the sword coming and not warn the wicked of the evil of his ways? Oh, no! Regardless of himself, as the gallant Roman knight Curtius leaped with his horse into the yawning chasm, burying himself alive therein for the safety of his nation,—as the Horatii and Curiatii perilled all for their country's weal,—so this true soldier for Jesus is ready to leap into the fiery flame, to pluck poor sinners as brands from the burning; heeding neither the world's ire nor its scorn, if he may but finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he has received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

After a prayer such as he only could make, so anointed with the unction of the Holy One,—a prayer perfumed with heavenly incense, in which, indeed, it seemed as if you heard a mortal man talking with his Maker,—a prayer that would remind you, on the one hand, of Moses amid the smoke and flame, the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, and on the other of the soft, beaming glory and

divine transparency of the mount of transfiguration,—after a prayer when it did truly seem as if the glory of the Lord descended and lit up with scintillations the pulpit,—a dazzling halo encircling it,—thence coruscating through the house and falling like so many tongues of fire on the assembly,—he rises to speak, his face shining, from his intercourse with the Deity, as that of Moses, the servant of the Lord, when he came down with slow and reverent step from the holy mount.

He rises to address the assembled congregation; the fervor of his own heaven-inspired soul breathed already into his hearers on “The Race for Glory;” he himself feeling, as fire in his bones, that either eternal life, or indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will be the final award of such as win or such as lose in this so solemn, so fearful, so awfully-important race.*

The nature of his subject requires that he should advert to certain points or particulars in connection with the race-course,—*the game* of racing or running being that to which the figurative language of the text refers, and which is to be elucidated and explained previously to its application. With that consummate skill of which he was so perfect a master, his soul the while glowing with intensest love and holy fervor, as the herald or proclaimer he announces, first of all, that the race is now to be run; he shows what

* The text was Heb. xii. 1, 2:—“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

it is, the nature of it, and the terms—the only terms—on which it can be lawfully and successfully run. This is his part: he is the herald.

He next points to the Judge, the *righteous* Judge, the one who is to be the arbiter of the race. This is Jesus. As in the Isthmian game the judge or crowner of the race was the one who, with a piece of white chalk, marked out the exact course or *track* of the runner, as well as awarded the crown, so in this case Jesus is not only the crowner and judge of the heavenly race, but the leader or forerunner, going before and marking the whole course or *track* with his own blood. In the garden he marked the sacred spot, when, (in the dead hour of the night, alone, having gone the distance of a stone's-throw from the three favored disciples,) on the new, fresh herbage, the "great drops of blood falling to the ground" left their ineffaceable stain. "Led to Pilate's hall, the scourge lays open his back, and causes his precious blood to flow from thence to the Pretorium; there the crown of thorns again continues the stream, till he bears his cross and sinks beneath the weight, to Calvary's mount, and there the residue is now poured out."*

Next he proceeds to point out the runners. "Run one, run *all*:" this is the thrilling announcement.

Now the runner is put on the course. Is he to *drag* himself along, continually complaining, "My leanness, my leanness!"? Oh, no! He is to *run*. How? With what speed? Detached from all else, "all his soul in his eyes,"† with his eye ever intent on the judge, seeking singly his

* See Summerfield's Sermons, p. 51.

† Ibid.

approbation, dead to human applause or censure, so is he to run, "looking unto Jesus."

It was in this part of the discourse he introduced the illustration of the "golden ball." Ah me! One had now *run* long and well; with swift speed he had distanced many of his competitors: straining every nerve, freed from every weight, in singleness of heart pleasing God, treading with unswerving footprint the appointed race-track, flying on the clearly-marked line as the wind, blind to surrounding objects, dead to every sound of pleasure, trampling down temptation under his feet, breaking through every cunningly-woven web of Satan and of sin, his panting bosom already beating high with anticipated conquest, and the full fruition of eternal joy, the prize in view, the *terminus*, the goal, the end of the course, nearly reached, for an instant his fixed, steady gaze is diverted; a glittering bauble has been thrown on the *track*, on the race-course. Like the brilliant scales of the serpent in the garden, his eye is dazzled with the all-but-supernatural brightness: the bait is tempting, most specious; it is the "*besetting sin*, the *well-circumstanced sin*." It lures with its brightness, it charms with its false but specious hues; Satan is near, with his deep craft and subtle poison; a doubt is infused; reason is substituted for the word of God, the only sure and certain shield for the defence of the soul against the wiles of the devil; and ere long the scene of Paradise is re-enacted: the once hardly-matched runner stoops to pick up the golden ball, casting away, in an evil hour, his confidence,—the faith of Jesus, which alone has great recompense of reward.

The effect of this illustration, so poorly conceived, so

faintly drawn, in comparison with the living original, together with the inimitable beauty and fervor of the whole discourse, may be slightly conceived of, but cannot possibly be adequately expressed.

The religion of the Bible is no longer, in the hands of this inspired limner, a dry, every-day story; immortality and eternal life are not the dreams of a pleasing delusion; God is not to be mocked, truth not to be slighted, neither is it at our option to come to or stay away from the heavenly feast. If any count themselves unworthy of eternal life, or deridingly inquire, "Where is the God of judgment?" here is one who, in great humility but with holy boldness, (even with "the boldness of Peter and John" as they stood before the council, with Annas and Caiaphas at its head,) "shuns not to declare *all* the counsel of God." With the spirit and power of Elias he speaks: no weak Ahab, no painted Jezebel, no oscillating Herod, no vengeful Herodias, does he fear; no smile from the great at the expense of truth does he seek to win, no attention or notice from the rich does he court, no smile of contemptuous pity at his credulity and weakness does he dread; but, as with the thunderbolts of Ja-Jehovah tempered with the love of Calvary, with great plainness, though with unexampled beauty and force of speech, with every gift and grace of oratory, person, face, mien, youth, celestial beauty, heavenly love, holy ardor, and with a grace of action never surpassed, he seeks this day, as Eliezer of old, to win, with bridal ornaments and every rich device, a *bride* for his Master,—one who, with a firm, unshaken heart, will reply, when appealed to,—in the fear and strength of Jehovah, as did Rebekah, turning away from childhood's sweetest spot and every

fond memory and association,—“I will go;”—“Where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”

At length he closes, sitting down amid the most dazzling coruscations, and the weird spell is broken; the congregation arouse themselves as from a deep trance,—their identity, of which before they were scarcely conscious, now once more restored. It was as if an incubus had been removed from the congregation, but in this case a sweetly-pleasing one, not one of fear and dread.

Of those present were three young men of the same age and the same pursuits, all aspiring, ambitious, ignorant of the power and the glory of the cross, but dazzled by the glare of earth, then new to them, and fancying all they dreamed of and the world promised real,—ready to chase o’er mead and lawn the butterfly Pleasure with its gaudy hues and changing colors. These three young men had been drawn to God’s house and his people, by the current, with the rest, and in the same seat they sat, being united by friendship’s fond, endearing ties. Together they leave the house at the close of the services; arm-in-arm they walk; after a little they separate, each one seeking the paternal roof, separating only for a little season, for never long were they apart in those halcyon days of their young, opening years. One of the three returns home with an entire new train of thought and association opened up in his mind. He had heard that morning the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden; and, though his eyes were as yet but partly opened,—he “a half-awakened child of man,”—yet had he begun to see and feel that he was “naked,”—a sinner by nature and practice, and exposed to the wrath

to come; and, though soon accounted a "fool" by one at least of these dear friends,—the friends of his early choice and love,—friends still, and dear to his heart as ever,—yet, ere long, from this day the cry extorted from his burdened, sin-sick soul was, "Life! Life!—eternal life!"

Holy man of God! Blessed minister and servant of our dear Lord Jesus! The tears thou sheddest in secret, and with which thou wateredst the seed sown that day, will not, it is to be hoped, be found *in the end* to have been wholly lost. Thou mayest yet hail one—long a loiterer—one long astray like a lost sheep in the wilderness—in that world so bright where now thou livest; and the ecstasy that will thrill thy soul then will repay a thousandfold all thy griefs and fears here below. Another jewel will then be added to thy starry crown, which thou canst cast anew before the throne of God and of the Lamb. Nay, all the heavenly harpers will raise one higher, louder note, at another soul plucked from the jaws of sin and death,—cast, as it were, from the depths of the sea and from the belly of the whale, far, far up on the safe, golden-sanded, translucent shore of a blissful eternity.

CHAPTER XIX.

STATIONED IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

THE New York Conference for the year 1821 held its annual session in Troy, in the month of June; and though Mr. Summerfield, owing to his hasty departure from Ireland, had not brought with him the usual letters of recommendation, yet, through the good offices of the Rev. John (afterward Bishop) Emory, this obstacle was removed, and he was received into the Conference, "the term of probation required being calculated from the period of his joining the Conference in Ireland, which left only one year for trial previous to his admission to the office of a deacon."*

During the session of the Conference he preached to a large assembly, a great number of preachers being present. Of this sermon we have an account from the pen of Dr. James W. Alexander, of Princeton, New Jersey. It is as follows:—

"It was, I think, in the spring of 1821 that I first saw Mr. Summerfield. Having undertaken a pedestrian excursion in the state of New York, I happened to be at Troy during the meeting of a Conference, and there heard him

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 186.

preach before a large assembly, which included a great number of preachers. It was before disease had marred his youthful beauty. There was an infantine freshness and ruddiness in his cheek, and an inexpressible brilliancy in his tender and yet laughing eye. His voice was music itself. Every thing in his manner was instinct with exuberant vigor.

“His text was 1 Cor. xi. 1 :—‘Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.’ He held forth Paul’s imitation of Christ as the model for the Christian minister. After the lapse of twenty-four years, it is not wonderful that my recollections of the discourse should be somewhat faint; yet some things there were which made an indelible impression. Eloquent as he was in every part of his masterly performance, I distinctly remember that no single portion of it so moved and melted the great assembly, even to tears, as his simple rehearsal of the apostle’s sufferings, in his own words :—‘In stripes, in imprisonments,’ &c. : 2 Cor. vi. 4–11. Never have I heard a passage of Scripture recited with such pathos. He introduced a beautiful quotation from the dying expressions of Melancthon in allusion to a shipwreck; but I cannot now venture to reproduce it. In turning to the audience at large, near his peroration, he said, ‘But, brethren, you should all be preachers; not pulpit-preachers, it may be, but street-preachers and parlor-preachers.’ And then, in reference to some who dread the undue multiplication of preachers, and who are jealous for the dignity of the regular ministry, he cited, with a very significant archness, the reply of Moses when Joshua complained that Eldad and Medad were prophesying :—‘And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord’s

people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.' Num. xi. 29.

"In this, as in all Mr. Summerfield's performances, nothing was more remarkable than the total forgetfulness of self. All was childlike simplicity and nature, yet fervid and pathetic to a degree which cannot be communicated to those who never heard him. Many orators have I heard, but never any one whose elocution and manner were so captivating and persuasive. The unction and confidence of his prayers were also strikingly great, and the manner in which he repeated the Lord's Prayer transcended all the tricks of elocutionists and actors."*

On his return to the city of New York, as he was about commencing the arduous and responsible labors of another year, he writes thus in his diary:—

"Having been appointed for New York City, I have sought to ratify the same at the throne of grace. I feel as if God would be with me this year. He has given me a good earnest of it, and I enter upon my arduous duties upon his strong arm alone."†

At the period to which we now refer, there were but four large Methodist (Episcopal) churches in the city of New York. These were Duane and John Street Churches on one side of the city, and Allen and Forsyth Street on the other. There were, in addition, several smaller churches and societies in quite a feeble and depressed condition:—the Bowery, Greenwich, and the little Mission-House in Broome Street, near the East River. There was also a

* From an article by the Rev. James W. Alexander, D.D., New Jersey: New Edit. of Life, pp. 318, 319.

† Large Edit. of Life, p. 186.

large upper room for preaching in Crosby Street, in a house lately built (or purchased) by the Methodists for the Wesleyan Seminary, one of the first literary institutions established by the connection in this country.*

The churches were very plain, like the people themselves,—built more for the simple purpose of divine worship than for taste or show. They were wholly free from any adornment, depending more for embellishment on the descending glory of the Lord and the presence of Jesus than the skill of the sculptor, or the art of the painter, or the genius of the architect. A plain people, singled out from the world, “conforming not to its customs, fashions, or maxims,”† known by their entire and rigid abstinence from what the world usually calls innocent amusements,—their dress and habits, maxims and spirit, wholly different from that of the world,—seemed very well to accord with free seats, pine benches, and plain, simple, even homely and unadorned, houses of religious worship.

The city itself, at the time of which we are speaking, formed but one circuit, all the preachers passing in rotation from one church to another, occupying *usually* three different pulpits and addressing three different congregations on one and the same day. Their various gifts and graces, like the life-blood in our veins, circulated throughout the entire body of Christ,—joint thus compacted to joint, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part; and the whole society felt to a greater or lesser de-

* It was the *first*, we believe, if we except Cokesbury College, (founded 1785;) but this college, established in the true Wesleyan *spirit*, was not prosecuted to a successful termination.

† Life of Mrs. Fletcher, p. 19.

gree the healthful and invigorating glow. Great life and spiritual animation prevailed throughout most of the churches from one end of the year to the other; and sinners were continually inquiring, with streaming eyes and laboring hearts, "What shall we do to be saved? How shall we flee from the wrath to come?"*

The year that Mr. Summerfield was stationed in the city of New York, the Rev. Joshua (now Bishop) Soule was the preacher in charge; and great indeed was the estimation in which he was held. Among those also who labored in word and doctrine this year in the city was the Rev. Marvin Richardson, who was then in the full vigor of his ministry and preached with great power and acceptance. A peculiar *unction* attended his word; and at times it has *seemed* as if under the power thereof the house was shaken. The Rev. William Ross (a name of blessed memory) was stationed in the city this year, and was indeed a man of undoubted abilities, possessing also a nature all given to love and friendship. There was also the Rev. Heman Bangs, whose ministry was most pungent and awakening, many sinners being happily brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus through his instrumentality, among whom may be mentioned the Rev. John (now Dr.) Kennaday. There was yet another whose name we have reason to remember, (the Rev. Stephen Martindale,) who, we think, was that year transferred from the Philadelphia to the New York Conference,—a preacher of pleasing pul-

* We write only of that which we have seen and known. Additions were continually made to the church of such as should be saved. The work of God was not peculiar to one part of the year more than another.

pit-address and of kind and winning manners; simple, unostentatious, free from a narrow and sectarian spirit. Besides these, (but we do not know that we have mentioned all, depending *wholly* on memory,) there were, in addition to the ministers placed especially over the churches, among the number of zealous and able laborers in the city this memorable year, Dr. Bangs and the Rev. Thomas Mason, of the Book-Room, and the Rev. John Smith, A.M., and the Rev. Henry Chase, teachers in the Wesleyan Seminary, Crosby Street; these, with the youthful and eloquent Summerfield,—whose praise was already in all the churches,—formed a concentration of talent and power such as perhaps is not often found in one place and at one time,—all earnest laborers and true yoke-fellows in God's vineyard.*

As we cast our eye back to these distant years, we remember how we were attracted by the simplicity of the people. The society seemed to us like a large family, whereof all "them that believed were of one heart and of one soul,"—such was the union that prevailed. There were perhaps within the compass of the whole society in the city but two or three of rather larger possessions than the rest, and by birth, education, and alliance, accustomed to move in a higher sphere than the generality of Methodists in those days; but they were persons of very retired habits, of the most humble and unpretending character. Like Lady Maxwell, Mrs. Fletcher, and others, they had fully separated them-

* To complete the summary, we ought to say the Rev. P. P. Sandford was the Presiding Elder of the New York district,—a man who magnified his office, and who, under a somewhat reserved if not stern exterior, possessed true sensibility of heart. All his powers were devoted singly to the service and glory of God.

selves from the worldly rich, the great, and the gay, and were solicitous to walk but by one rule, to mind the same thing, not as pleasing man, but pleasing God. On the whole, those who were the most active, the most known, whose voice and presence were most potential in the society, were men in middling circumstances in life, who, whatever their business or engagements in the daytime, were sure to be found at their post, at some religious meeting or service, at night, leading on God's "sacramental host" to sure and certain victory. Blessed men! Ye thought not of rest; your care was not to please yourselves, but to labor day and night for Him who had loved you and given himself for you; and God has not forgotten your work and labor of love. Yours was not the eminence of wealth or of any worldly distinction, but of zeal for God and for his cause. High you built your nests,—so high, the spoiler that robs the rich of their wealth, the great of their greatness, and lays low, even in the dust, the ivory palaces of princes, could not reach them,—safe those silver-lined nests from all harm.*

The simplicity and fervor which marked the public religious exercises of the Methodists at this time was beautiful. It appeared to realize what you would imagine of the primitive Christians. Plain churches, plain dress on the part of preachers and people, mortified lives, the absence of all

* We have a printed PLAN, in which the whole city is divided into four districts, and these apportioned to classes of seven members each, whose duty it was *in turn* to attend the Wednesday evening prayer-meetings. It is signed E. Washburn, July, 1822. Some of the blessed dead we mention:—Joseph Smith, N. C. Hart, J. Roby, S. S. Waldo, William Jewet, S. Price, J. Buckmaster, Ralph Hoyt, William Kenworthy, G. King, George Higgins, David Crawford, and, we suppose, many, many others.

luxury both of food, furniture, and apparel, a strict adherence to the "General Rules," (not deeming them too rigid,) found a rich return and an ample recompense in the glory that rested on their assemblies and the love that warmed the hearts of the brethren one toward another.

We do not mean by this to say that even in these earlier and simpler days practice invariably accompanied profession, or that there did not exist causes and grounds of complaint, or that there was not much for the truly sincere and holy to mourn over. This was the case in the apostles' times; and there has yet been no period in the history of the Christian church answering to that glorious era which is yet to come. But we speak of the society as a whole; we speak of the plainness and simplicity of the people called Methodists, as seen in the various *external* marks to which reference has been made; of the glory that rested on them as a *peculiar* people, and on account of *the reproach* that was attached to their name. We speak of the glowing fervor that animated their worshipping assemblies, and of the volume of praise with which, as with the voice of many waters, they made the upper arches ring.

The singing of the Methodists was proverbial. Their simple, sweet melody, partaking little of the exact science of the schools, drew thousands to their churches. There was a charm in it which even the ungodly could not resist; and many who were disposed to laugh at the *manner* in which the fervent zeal of many would manifest itself have felt the power of their singing in their souls, and, almost ere they were aware, have forsaken the ranks of the enemy, and have cast in their lot with the people of God.

What singing! It was the singing of the heart, of the

soul. It was the soul giving full and free vent to the unutterable emotions that dwelt therein. It was the concord of love, the spontaneous melody of devotion. This is the singing of angels,—of seraph-spirits; and, as it seemed to us, used to be well imitated in the plain, old Methodist churches. Upward, upward, the volume of melody would arise, like a cloud of glory ascending to the skies; and, as it rose, it would break,—break in blessings on the soul. No merely-taught or well-learned strain, however correct or varied, can equal the music of the loving, humble, holy, grateful, joyful heart.

Then, when the whole society, gathered together from every part of the city, met in one of the larger churches, once a quarter, to hold a love-feast, what sounds were heard!—what strains of holy joy, of uprising rapture! Then was realized what was so often sung:—

“Strive we—in affection strive;
Let the purer flame revive;
Such as in the martyrs glow’d,
Dying champions for their God:
We like them may live and love;
Call’d we are their joys to prove;
Saved with them from future wrath,—
Partners of like precious faith.”*

It was in these early, simple times, Mr. Summerfield appeared among us,—when Methodism was little known out of its own circle, save as a term of reproach, or as affording subject-matter for the gibe of the scoffer. And we mean no disparagement to any other dear and honored servant

* New Hymn-Book, p. 428.

of our Lord Jesus—far from this—when we say he drew public attention in a new and unwonted manner to this despised people, (for such they surely were,) and put the name of Methodist and Methodism in every mouth.

Deeply attached as he was to Methodism, he was wholly free from any narrow sectarianism; and, his eloquence and piety opening the doors of all evangelical churches to him, he entered them,—rarely adverting to lesser and comparatively unimportant points of doctrine, but constantly and most earnestly insisting on all that was fundamentally essential.

The doctrine of the atonement (as we have seen by extracts from his sermons inserted in this work) was his great theme; and what is built upon it,—the entire corruption of man's nature. These, in connection with man's utter inability, apart from the grace of God, to help himself,—with the necessity of deep, heartfelt, pungent, genuine repentance, and *faith* in Christ, as the sole condition of salvation, irrespective of works,—and the necessity of a holy life as the evidence of a genuine faith in Christ, were the chief points on which he constantly insisted; with also, we may add, the doctrine of the *direct* witness of the Holy Spirit to our adoption and sonship in the family of God. It is amazing the view he had, almost from the first moment of his conversion, of the *mystery of faith* and the wonders of redemption. He felt, deeply felt, in his inmost soul he felt, that salvation was the free gift of God, all of grace,—“not of works, lest any man should boast;” that, by the absolute freeness of the gift, “boasting” is *wholly* “excluded;” and that the only plea any can offer is, that for me, the chief of sinners, Jesus died; this the plea of the

thief on the cross, and this the plea of all; "God having concluded *all* in unbelief, that he might have *mercy* on all."

With these essential and eternal truths ever on his lips and living in his heart, Mr. Summerfield went from church to church, not only among his own people, but wherever a door was opened, thousands upon thousands attracted to this or that part of the city when it was known he was to speak; and such was his anxiety to meet the endless calls and demands that were made upon his time and strength, that from one end of the Conference year to the other he allowed himself to be continually "pressed out of measure," and to do what was wholly "above" his feeble "strength."

Soon after he had entered upon what may properly be called the last year of his *active* ministry, (the remaining years of his life being but a lingering passage to the grave,) he made this entry in his diary:—

"I find that my ensuing year's labors will be *double* my expectations." And again:—"I feel as if this year would terminate my mortal existence. My body is perfect weakness: my soul sympathizes too often with my body, and wants that lively vigor and energy I so much need: but I *feel* that Jesus will do all things well."*

Such the bodily weakness of this man of God during this year of unceasing effort; the outward man all the while fast decaying, and even the inward man participating somewhat in the weakness of the body. But the want of spiritual vigor was perceptible only to himself; no one would have supposed it from seeing how the Spirit of glory and of Christ rested on his public ministrations as well as

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 186.

on his more private labors, prompt as he was to obey every call, even to that of a little child.

With the exception of a short period in the summer, it pleased the great Head and Builder of his church here below to preserve the health of his servant throughout the entire year; during which, with the exception of occasional excursions to different places and towns, his labors were confined to the city of New York. In the very beginning of his regular labors in the city, on June 10, he preached the anniversary sermon of the Bethel Union, in the Mariners' Church, Roosevelt Street, to a vast crowd,—the house being filled to its utmost extent,—every spot where a foot could rest, and in which a body could be pressed, occupied. Then, again, on the following Wednesday evening, in Dr. Romeyn's church, he delivered an address on the first report of the institution. He was in his happiest mood this night, drawing smiles and tears from all.

With respect to Mr. Summerfield's power over the feelings of an audience, the following are the remarks of the Rev. Mr. Danforth:—

“He has sometimes been facetious in a meeting of a marine Bible society, or a missionary society, to such a degree as to make the whole audience shake with laughter, while his own lovely countenance relaxed only into a gentle smile. But then, if he thought the humorous chord had been too violently swept by him, he would by no very slow process touch the pathetic one, and then every smile would flee away, and the tears would begin to course down not merely the delicate cheek of female beauty, but the rough visage of the hardy sailor or the uncouth laborer. And as

he just assumed the mastery—what power has real eloquence!—over all that came within the limit of his voice, rousing or hushing such passions as he pleased, he was careful that the last passion excited should be a serious one, and endeavored in general to leave a solemn impression at the conclusion.”*

In his Sabbath sermon in the Mariners’ Church, one figure remains fixed on our mind to this day. He was speaking of the joy in heaven over repenting sinners; and the idea or figure was that the whole minstrelsy of heaven would be hushed to catch the first sigh wafted, the faintest whisper carried, to the courts above, from one sorrowing, sin-sick, overburdened heart. The action of the speaker on this occasion conveyed the impression of the angelic host, moved by one impulse, all stopping their harping at the same time, their fingers stayed, their hands lingering on the chords of the golden harps they were about to strike, and their ears all attent to the plaintive cry:—“God be merciful to me, a sinner.” The corresponding action of the speaker, more impressive even than his words, with his face shining with a radiance all divine, like that of dying Stephen’s, is as vivid to our mind this day as when it happened.

We may also refer here to his sermon delivered nearly at the expiration of his first year of service in the city, in behalf of the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb. This was delivered on the 7th of May, 1822, in the Reformed Dutch Church, Nassau Street. The collection taken up after the delivery of the sermon

* From a sketch by the Rev. Joshua N. Danforth: New Edit. of Life, p. 306.

“amounted to something over one thousand dollars, a gold necklace, and several rings.”*

Of this sermon Dr. Bethune thus speaks :—“The sermon for the deaf and dumb, as printed, is nothing like what it was when delivered, either in thought or language. Summerfield himself wrote it, but after it was preached. He could not catch his own ‘winged words.’ The pen trammelled him. One striking sentence which thrilled through us all is left out altogether :—‘Turn away from these children of affliction,’ said he ; ‘and when the Lord says, “Inasmuch as you did it not unto the least of these, you did it not unto me,” you too may be dumb, speechless, in shame.’ ”†

Of this sermon the Rev. Mr. Danforth thus speaks :—“That appeal for the Deaf and Dumb Asylum in New York cannot be forgotten by those who listened to it, as long as memory can be exercised. It was the zenith of his power, his fame, his usefulness.”‡

But we must not suppose that while he was so ready for every good word and work, preaching for the various denominations, entering every open door, that he neglected his own beloved church, or loved any of the gates of Zion more than hers. If, on the one hand, he did not intrench himself within the pale of his own church,—if he felt, as he so often used to express himself,—

“Let names and sects and parties fall,
And Jesus Christ be all in all,”—

if these words were so often in his mouth and dwelling on his tongue,—if he was seen night after night on this plat-

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 206.

† Dr. Bethune’s “Recollections of Summerfield :” New Edit. of Life, p. 317.

‡ From a sketch by the Rev. Joshua N. Danforth : New Edit. of Life, p. 299.

form and that, grasping with the warm grasp of brotherly love all who loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, let it not, on the other hand, for one moment be thought that he was indifferent to the growing interests or spiritual prosperity of his own branch of that church which Jesus purchased with his own blood.

It is true he did not, as the rest of his brother-preachers did, fill three appointments on the Sabbath; but on the "Preachers' Plan" his name stood for two appointments, one in the morning and one in the evening. Three sermons on *the same day* was beyond his strength; but the greater part of the year he preached thus often,—at least as long as he could possibly sustain the pressure.

Willing as this dear and loved man was to spend and be spent, in season and out of season, for Christ, to enter each open door,—anxious as he was with trumpet-voice on all the world to call,—never was he so happy, so much at rest in his mind, as when he found himself among his own people.

Of a Sabbath morning, for instance, let the appointment be at John Street, or at the little Mission-House in Broome Street, or in the Wesleyan Seminary, Crosby Street, (afterward appropriated for the Book-Room and printing-establishment,) with what joy would he tread the courts of the Lord's house! Let us select one fair morning, when, at the Seminary in Crosby Street, he spoke to an overflowing congregation (those present who moved in the first walks of society) from this well-remembered text, Isa. xi. 13:—"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious." In some part of the

city a love-feast had been held that morning, and, fresh from the heavenly entertainment, he rose up, with his beaming face,—we see it in its sweet loveliness as we write,—to address the waiting assembly. The theme upon which he designed to discourse was a congenial one,—one that he loved to expatiate on,—for it related directly to Christ both in his divine and human nature; the general scope of the text also leading him, as his manner was of a Sabbath morning, more especially to direct his discourse to the church.*

This was one of his little, simple, sweet discourses, when, feeling himself at home, surrounded with many familiar faces and loving, praying hearts, he reposed a little, as it were, under the shadow of the old family tree; or, to use another figure, like one on a swift-gliding stream, suffered himself to be carried down gently by the current, only now and then dipping in the oar, which left its silvery wake at every measured stroke. What strength he did use was laid out mainly on the first topic or head of his discourse, which was this:—"What is meant by the root of Jesse?"

To magnify Christ,—to give him a name "which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth,"—this was what he loved. He spoke of Jesus in his divine nature:—*First*, as the root of

* "Few persons of any seriousness will forget his morning services in the house of God, which were invariably set apart for *Christians*; the evening for the promiscuous assembly."*

* "Recollections of Summerfield," by Marinus Willett, M.D.: New Edit. of Life, p. 293.

Jesse; "for, as God, he was the first of all beings,—the root of Adam as well as every living thing."* From his divine he descended to his human nature,—nothing more vividly present to him (such the quality of his faith) than the God-man in his low estate; the illumination of his mind on this all-essential and vital point of Christianity like the illumination (as it appeared to us) of John the Baptist; Jesus "the root and the offspring of David." This point he chiefly insisted on, and upon this he mostly dwelt; his faith immovably built on the word of God, and not staggering—no, not for an instant—at the great mystery of godliness.

We have alluded to his sickness during the course of the summer, this interrupting his pulpit-labors for a few weeks.† His first sermon after his recovery was preached in John Street Church, Sabbath morning, September 30, from Psalm cxvi. 12-14. The crowd was immense; every nook, crevice, bench, pillar, foothold, was occupied. In the gallery the people seemed to darken the walls. It was a sight, a spectacle, the manner in which the church was stowed, crammed, this day. We may judge somewhat of the huge, dense multitude, when, either on this or some similar occasion, Dr.

* Sermons, p. 133.

† When first attacked he was from home, (the writer of this memoir being with him;) but he was enabled to reach his brother-in-law's house before he was entirely prostrated. Writing of this sickness to Mrs. Garretson, of Rhinebeck, New York, wife of the Rev. Freeborn Garretson, (of precious memory,) he says, "Considering the pain I was in, and the nature of the complaint, I wonder how I arrived home. I did not *walk*, but *crawled*, to Brooklyn."*

* New Edit. of Life, p. 132.

Bethune tells us that he had to climb, like Zaccheus, not a tree, but a huge church-stove that stood in the northeastern section.* As the hour approached, no small anxiety was felt whether he would be able to preach; but He who restored him to the church in Cork, in answer to the fervent prayers of his people, had heard prayer again in his behalf, and once more he stood up with the cup of salvation in his hand, calling on the name of the Lord.

Not only on the Sabbath did he labor, but he filled, as long as he was able, his regular weekday appointment on the "Plan." Some of his ablest discourses were preached on these occasions. We recollect *one* in particular, on the "Second Commandment," (Matt. xxii. 39,) or, "The Love of our Neighbor," preached of a weekday evening in Duane Street Church. Among those present was one of the ablest and most eloquent lawyers in the city,—one, indeed, who was often found among his most attentive hearers. The sermon was one that showed the logical power of Mr. Summerfield's mind in an eminent degree. Mr. Summerfield was often so much *overworked* that he failed to do himself justice; but in this instance he analyzed his text with great closeness and accuracy, defining each point with marked precision, answering, under the first general head or branch of the discourse, in the most conclusive and satisfactory manner, the several queries growing out of it; as, "Who is my neighbor?" "What is my duty to my neighbor?" and, "What is the measure of my duty to my neighbor?" Not one part, but every part, of this

* Dr. Bethune's "Recollections of Summerfield:" New Edit. of Life, p. 316.

important discourse was elaborated with great care, and *applied* with equal fidelity to the conscience.*

As the season advanced, and the cold weather and the ice increased the difficulty of crossing the East River, it became desirable for Mr. Summerfield to remove to the city. Here the hand of a kind and gracious providence was again seen. Under the hospitable roof of Dr. and Mrs. Beekman, (the kindest of friends,) in Cortland Street, in the immediate vicinity of John Street Church, he found the home he so much needed for the winter.† In November (we think it was) Mr. Summerfield removed from his brother-in-law's, Brooklyn, to Dr. Beekman's, occupying a pleasant front-room in the third story of their quiet and peaceful mansion. Here he spent the winter, his books—his silent friends and counsellors—snugly disposed on shelves around him; his library, not very large, but select, well assorted,—selected evidently on the principle of the elucidation of the Bible rather than with a view to gratify the taste or to indulge the curiosity.‡

On the last night of the year he preached in John Street Church, the Rev. Heman Bangs (we think) preaching one

* This sermon—the thirty-ninth in the published collection—will well repay the most attentive perusal. To judge justly of Mr. Summerfield, we must carefully and prayerfully read his sermons.

† We have just read of the death of Dr. Beekman, at his residence in Tarrytown, New York. The three have now met,—the doctor, his wife, and he whom they both loved so much. Happy are the three now,—happy to all eternity! No more sickness, no more pain, no more sorrow.

‡ This library, as it stood disposed in order in his room, can now be seen in one of the alcoves of the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut; it having been presented to the institution, after his death, by his brother-in-law, Mr. Blackstock.

of the sermons, Mr. Summerfield the other. Great numbers could not find admittance into the church; vast indeed the multitude assembled together this last night of the old year 1821.*

* There are two names among the familiar ones mentioned in this chapter that we desire to repeat:—the names of William Ross and Dr. Bangs,—one still living, the other long since dead, sleeping in the sweet dust by the side of his friend and brother, Summerfield. When Mr. Summerfield first heard of the death of William Ross, (dying three or four months before himself,) he thus wrote in his diary:—

“February 14, 1824.—Received the intelligence of the decease of Brother Ross (then in his second year in Brooklyn) on Thursday evening last: he was interred yesterday afternoon. Father of the fatherless, remember his orphans and his poor afflicted widow! One of the lights of our church and one of the hopes of our Israel is extinguished in this event. He was a burning and a shining lamp: and I am yet alive.”*

William Ross, as a man and a preacher, was far above the ordinary rank,—of a most honest, tender, and uncorrupt heart. He concentrated his strong and clear and sound mind, as his brother-friend, Mr. Summerfield, did, on his one great, all-absorbing work,—the preaching of the word and making full proof of his ministry; seeking, by every means and appliance in his power, (under God,) to make himself “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of life.” His sermons were most thoroughly studied: they were marked by great intellectual strength: they were also full of the power of scriptural truth. With justice may we speak of him as eloquent: he was truly so, and at times in a high degree: words of fire would then burn on his lips.

The last two years of his ministry were spent in Brooklyn, Sands Street Church,—the old Brooklyn hive. Here he received a most extraordinary baptism of the Holy Spirit, God hereby preparing him for his death and burial; and great and glorious was the work of God in this society which followed, God setting his final seal on the closing ministry of this his dear servant. The hour of his death was one of great glory, an amazing sense of the power

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 314.

Thus closed another year of his short mortal life. In the year 1818 he was at a watch-night on his knees among the devout worshippers in Whitefriar Street Church, Dublin; in 1819 he was in the church in Cork, sitting in an obscure corner, listening to Mr. Doolittle speak of the *three* watch-nights mentioned in the Bible:—the Egyptian watch-night when the Jews were delivered; our Lord's

of the Highest and of the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost resting on all present.

The society in Sands Street, after his death, with a just appreciation of his great worth, and in the fulness of their love, made a handsome provision for his esteemed widow and his orphan children; thus responding to the prayer of Mr. Summerfield at the news of his early and unexpected death:—"Father of the fatherless, remember his orphans and his poor afflicted widow!"

What shall we say of Dr. Bangs, our second father, whose love has always been to us a fountain of unfailing consolation and support, (his love in this respect like the love of Jesus to us.) He took us by the hand in the beginning, and the grasp has never been relaxed. We have reason to love and revere him as a father; and so, we may truly say, has the whole Methodist church in this country. He has been—as Paul the aged to the church of Corinth—as a father to it; a stanch friend, a firm, granite pillar,—never yielding, turning, or bending,—always (like Ney on the retreat from Moscow) with his face to the foe. He was one of the first (if not the first) who wielded a successful pen in her defence,—ably supporting her doctrines, discipline, and episcopacy,—when literary champions were few and far between. He did battle for the church he loved so well—from early youth to hoary hairs—in the darkest days, when little else but reproach, labor, suffering, contumely, were his portion. To work for the church of his love and the interests of Zion (which he deemed identical) has been the sole business of a long, most useful, and honored life; but God reserved his chiefest honors for his last days,—*filling* his aged servant with the spirit of love, of fear, and a sound mind,—making him a witness and an advocate of his power to save from *all* sin and to cleanse the soul from all unrighteousness; this the crown of glory he has placed on his head in his last, closing, peaceful years.

watch-night in the garden; and Paul and Silas's watch-night. On the last night of 1820 he was a lonely watcher on the great deep; and now he is in the city of New York, preaching in the first Methodist church erected on this continent; not, indeed, within the very building itself, but in one that stood on the old ground,—John Street Church having been shortly before this time rebuilt,—the plain, old-fashioned structure substituted for one of a more modern and improved appearance.

The following are his own remarks at the close of this year, taken from a letter to his father, dated New York, January 12, 1822:—

“We are doing well here in our church concerns: the Lord has graciously poured out his Spirit on the late festival occasions, and numbers have been converted to him. I preached on the watch-night in John Street, and the word was indeed accompanied with power: it was the best season of the kind ever remembered in this city; but particularly on last Sabbath the Lord visited his people. I preached in the evening in John Street, and, after preaching, I renewed the covenant, as we do in Europe. It was altogether new here. It was accompanied with a great blessing, and between *twenty* and *thirty* souls have been added to the Lord in consequence; besides, there is a great deepening of religion in the hearts of our people, and we have peace and love in all our borders.”*

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 194.

CHAPTER XX.

SUMMERFIELD AS A PASTOR.

WE have spoken a little in the foregoing chapter of Mr. Summerfield's public labors and ministry in the city of New York; but, oh how little! It is hard to reproduce that spirit,—to make it live again. His life—his whole life—was in the ministry of the word. He had no other life; he knew no other life. Writing but a few months before his death to an old Irish friend, he said, "My soul is in my work, and the zeal of the Lord's house is within my bones."*

This feeling followed him everywhere. It was as manifest in private as in public. Great as were his public labors, the calls on his private hours were without number. His society was eagerly courted, much sought after, by all ages, all names, all ranks; and this desire he to some extent gratified, feeling it to be his duty to do so; but, wherever he went, there was but one theme of converse,—Jesus and the resurrection. He had a happy art of telling pious anecdotes,—of narrating some pleasing story; but it was made ever subservient to the one great end.† It

* New Edit. of Life, p. 255.

† "Summerfield," says the Rev. Joshua Danforth, "could tell a pious anecdote, and with equal apparent ease and no alteration in manner, before one

could be truly said of this good minister of the Lord Jesus, as of the apostles in Jerusalem, that "daily in every house [he] ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."*

It is true he was pre-eminently gifted in this respect, and shone in social life with a lustre scarcely inferior to that of the pulpit. Mrs. Creah, on this head, thus speaks of him:—

"In private life he was no less pleasing. Affable, courteous, cheerful, and instructive, he was the happiness of the social circle. The aged sat and wondered at the wisdom which fell from his lips; while the young, rejoicing in his presence, delighted to honor him as their instructor and friend."†

Another of his dear friends, on this head, thus speaks:—

"Mr. Summerfield possessed in an eminent degree the talent of *parlor preaching*. In whatever society he was placed, he did not fail to use this talent in his Master's service. So rich and abundant were his resources, that the conversation never flagged; he maintained it with an interest and vivacity that charmed and edified every hearer. He possessed a great fund of wit, in the use of which he occasionally indulged; but it was with much caution and restraint. On one occasion we spent half an hour in company with a political gentleman of distinguished talent,

person or three thousand, with such a grace and amiable dignity, united with appositeness and impressiveness,—in a word, with such a *manner* as was the property of no other person I ever saw."*

* Acts v. 42.

† "Recollections of Summerfield," by Mrs. Creah: New Edit. of Life, p. 298.

who had great skill of repartee, but was entirely destitute of piety. Mr. Summerfield met him on his favorite ground, and opposed him with remarkable shrewdness and a display of talent which was really delightful; at the same time he did not omit to impress solemnly on his conscience his duty to his God.”*

His visits were never visits of mere form or ceremony, or visits made for the sake of the pleasure they afforded. Often would he have been glad to remain at home in communion with God, in study and prayer; but a voice within him seemed ever to say, “I must work the works of him that sent me while it is called to-day;” and in company, such a direction was given to the conversation, and such was the heavenly influence of his own spirit sanctified by grace, that he seemed ever to say to all present, young and old, “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”

He always closed these visits with prayer; singing also occasionally was introduced; and, so far as he possibly could, he sought to address each one singly, (warning *every* man,) and to make a direct and personal application of the truth to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

When the company was small, when his visits were more strictly purely pastoral, directly in view of some special case, he used to address himself to all personally. His object was to make them feel they must be righteous, they *must* be holy, and that unless they were born of God, born of water and of the Spirit, they would never enter into the kingdom

* “Recollections of Summerfield,” by Marinus Willett, M.D.: New Edit. of Life, p. 294.

of God. He did not deal with untempered mortar; he did not cry, "Peace," when there was no peace. His fidelity was like that of Nathan to David; what he said in the pulpit, with all meekness and love but with unswerving fidelity he followed up in private, and this even though he offended those whom he addressed.* It was his sharp, direct, pungent appeals, both in the pulpit and out of it,—face to face with his fellow-man,—that did the work, that sent the arrow home to the heart, that brought the wounded conscience, fluttering, bleeding, to the foot of the cross, to the feet of his blessed and adorable Master.

As a shepherd and bishop of souls, Mr. Summerfield manifested his solicitude in watching over those to whom his ministry had been especially blessed. He followed such continually with his prayers, his tears, his counsel, and, when absent from them, as Paul, writing to them.

We will here insert a portion of his correspondence, showing that, though absent in the flesh, he was present in the Spirit, with those whom, in the providence of God, he felt bound, in a particular manner, to watch over in love. The following letter was addressed to a lady to whom his ministry was blessed. It is dated New York, October 28, 1821:—

"MY DEAR SISTER,—

"For such, I trust, you will allow me to call you:—I can assure you it is with feelings of no ordinary kind that I now sit down to address you; but I feel as if I needed no introduction: you will meet me with the salutation, 'How

* We are describing what we have seen and known.

beautiful are the feet of them that publish glad tidings of good things!' Believe me, the day has not gone by in which I have not thought of you, and prayed that the God of all grace would cause you to abound in every good and perfect work; that he would perfect in you that which is lacking, and cause you to be 'steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.' . . . Startle not at difficulties: I have in general marked, that when they have crossed our religious path at our setting out, we have become more confirmed thenceforward in our professions; winds and storms have always the effect of causing the tree to strike deeper root and adhere more firmly to that into which it has been planted; and, again, those trees whose roots strike deepest are more upright in the tendency of their growth, and out-top the trees of the forest. Oh that this may indeed become the case with you!—that you may sink deeper into the love of God, and rise higher in the attainment and enjoyment of holiness of heart,—the mind which was in Jesus,—*straight* and *upright*, always tending heavenward, and attracted thither continually by the influence of the Sun of righteousness! I trust my dear sister has learned the happy art of fleeing to the strong for strength,—that she has often opened the treasury of heaven by the key of prayer, and, by the hand of faith, received out of *his* fulness grace upon grace. *Never forget* that 'man shall be blest as much as man permits,'—that the invitation is, 'Come, for all things are now ready: ask what you will, and it shall be given you; and whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, it shall be done for you;' but, mark:—ask in *faith*, nothing doubting; remember, the condition remains ever this:—'If thou canst believe, thou shalt see the

salvation of God;’ whatsoever ye ask in prayer, *believing that ye receive them*, ye shall have them; for ‘all things are possible to him that believeth.’ Seek, however, the present belief for a present blessing; though it is promised that you ‘shall see the salvation of God,’ yet it is if thou canst *now* believe. Oh, then, cry out, ‘Lord, I do believe,’—I do *now* believe; ‘help thou mine unbelief’! Believe that God has given you eternal life, and that life is in his Son:—

“ ‘See all your sins on Jesus laid—
The Lamb of God was slain:’

“And then,—

“ ‘Believe, and all your sin’s forgiven;
Only believe, and yours is heaven.’

“May God open to you the *mystery of faith*; give you eyes to see that he has given you *every thing* in the *gift of Jesus*,—pardon and holiness and heaven; believe that they *are yours*, and yours through the gift of Jesus, and *yours now*; and you will soon receive the seal of his Spirit, as the witness of your adoption into the family of *his dear Son*. Write me fully and freely, and I will from time to time communicate such advice as the Lord shall enable me. Meantime, with many assurances of Christian brotherly affection, believe me your sincere well-wisher,

“J. SUMMERFIELD.”*

Among those whose love he had gained as a preacher of the ministry of reconciliation, perhaps there was no *one*

* Large Edit. of Life, pp. 191–193.

nearer his heart, or for whose spiritual welfare he felt a livelier solicitude, than (the *then*) young Thomas Sergeant. A few extracts from his letters to this friend of his heart will be in place here. We select the following from a letter dated Paris, April 17, 1823:—

“The kindness of Brother B—— is not more than I expected from what had passed between him and me respecting you; but, my dear Thomas, you know the friendship of Him who sticketh even closer than a brother. He invites you to all the sweets of this holy relation,—‘the friend of God.’ ’Tis the tenderest, ’tis the most exalted, to which mortal man can be raised. It surpasses the privilege of a son, though that entails the inheritance; for, ‘if sons, then heirs:’ it is the manhood of a child of God. It is the privilege of admission into the secret chambers of the King Invisible. Oh, my Thomas, it is—and yet I cannot utter it; but I *feel* it. Examine the principles of the friendship which subsists in kindred souls,—say David and Jonathan,—refine it of its earthliness, and cast away the dregs of selfishness; don’t be afraid that it will volatilize into an ether too pure to realize: a *precious essence* will remain; now make ‘the High and Holy One’ one party, and see an earth-born worm the other. What ardor of mutual love!—what openness, what ingenuousness, what frankness, what confidence, on the part of the creature!—what complacency, what stability, on the part of the Creator! While the one exclaims, in the midst of human weakness, ‘Lord, all I am is known to thee!’ the other calms the rising fear with the sweet response, ‘Yet all I am is thine.’

“But I arrest myself; I am getting into depths which I cannot fathom, and yet into which I delight to plunge.

Oh, the fulness!—the bottomless abyss!—the depth! Does my Thomas often here

“ ‘Bathe his weary soul’ ?

Does he

“ ‘Thirst and faint and die to prove

The greatness of redeeming love’ ?

‘He shall be filled;’ ‘the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.’ ”*

Here is another kindred extract, from a letter dated Liverpool, June 24, 1823 :—

“Oh, my dear, dear Thomas, I have sweet remembrance of you in my prayers, being mindful also of your tears. I am *filled* with joy; yea, I am very full of comfort. My Father who is in heaven has mingled no such sweet in my cup as that which you afford me. ‘I live, if you stand fast in the Lord’ :—

“ ‘Happy if with thy latest breath

Thou may’st but gasp his name;

Preach him to all, and cry in death,

Behold, behold the Lamb!’

“Yes, my dear Thomas, exalt the Lamb. ‘He is worthy.’ Hang every spoil you have gained from the enemy upon his cross, and lay every honor you may receive from men at his feet. I do long to see you; nor will any one thing in America tend to hasten my return more than to be ‘somewhat filled with your company.’ I shall see you now with other eyes; no longer the keeper of the sheepfold, but the anointed of the Holy One, to bear his name among

* New Edit. of Life, pp. 208, 209.

the Gentiles. Walk worthy of thy high calling, and great shall be thy reward in heaven.”*

Here is yet another, dated New York, April 26, 1824:—

“I do believe, my dear Thomas, that the Lord will yet hold you like a star in his right hand, by which he will illuminate the churches. Oh that I may live to see it! Then, indeed, will my very heart rejoice. My dear Thomas, seek to lose yourself altogether in the will of God. Have no choice of your own; neither hope nor desire but according to the will of God. If he will, do you will; if he nill, do you nill; mark his finger in every thing relating to you: remember, your hairs are all numbered; and, if he regard *these*, no circumstance which can happen to you is too trivial for him to overrule to your eternal welfare. Take up every cross; never turn aside to avoid *one*,—you will always find *two* in the place of it; go into every open door, and cry unto Him continually to be endued with power from on high. Let your religion, like the apostle’s, be summed up in this comprehensive expression:—‘God, whose I am, and whom I serve:’ make an entire surrender of a whole heart to a perfect Saviour; thus will you realize the first part of this sentence:—‘whose I am:’ the second part will follow as a consequence. Feel yourself the *servant* of Jesus Christ; this was the highest character ever aspired after by the great Apostle of the Gentiles; at the feet of his Lord he had laid his character, reputation, talent, nay, his life itself: in this respect our Wesley also imitated him:—

* New Edit. of Life, p. 216.

“ ‘Take my soul and body’s powers;
Take my memory, mind, and will;
All my goods and all my hours,
All I know and all I feel;
All I think and speak and do:
Take my heart, and make it new.’

Thus, indeed, will you become a new creature: old things will be passed away; behold, all things will become new.”*

The writer of this memoir also had a place in his regard. The following extract is from a letter to him when Mr. Summerfield was recovering from his alarming illness in Philadelphia. It is dated Philadelphia, September 22, 1822:—

“But, oh, my dear William, if my anxieties were ever directed to you, they are increased now a hundredfold! ‘I long to be with you now and change my voice.’ ‘I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy.’ You have begun well; but, oh, my William, there is an *end* as well as a *beginning*! Oh that I could but see the *end* of your course! I am ambitious for you beyond measure, that you may walk worthy of Him who has called you unto his kingdom and glory. Is your eye upon the goal? Do you frequently anticipate that welcome sound:—‘Well done, well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord’? Do you frequently realize the end of your race in the words of him who was faithful unto death:—‘I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith’? If this would not be the issue, I declare

* New Edit. of Life, p. 232.

to you, my dear William, with all my affection for you, I would prefer to follow you to your grave now, in the bloom of life, while you bear the mark of Him 'whose you *now* are, and whom you *now* serve.' Pardon me for thus expressing my anxiety: I am not afraid of you if you keep your eye upon the Captain of our salvation. Never take it off for a moment to look upon the multitude who may hail you with their plaudits; but with steady step urge on your course, 'looking unto Jesus.' If the bubble of human applause follow you, thank God for it: it may make your word the more successful; but never do you follow the bubble: you will lose your life, and perhaps your soul too. Live for eternity; and, in reference to this only, follow after glory, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life."*

The following is from a letter written to Dr. James W. Alexander, (dated Baltimore, December 8, 1824,) when a student pursuing his studies for the ministry, at the Princeton Theological Seminary:†—

* New Edit. of Life, pp. 160, 161.

† Dr. Alexander gives the following account of his introduction to Mr. Summerfield,—the interview to which he refers occurring in the summer of 1824:—
"On the day following I was admitted, by what we call a mere casualty, to some personal acquaintance with Mr. Summerfield. He was about to be admitted, as an honorary member, to one of the literary societies of the College of New Jersey. While he was waiting to be introduced, he was brought by his attendant to the room which I occupied in Nassau Hall. No one who ever knew him needs to be reminded of the suavity and ease of his manner, even to the young. It was an interview which, though brief, left deep traces on my memory. He seized the moment to give me some very seasonable counsels. Among other subjects, he touched upon the necessity of divine illumination in order to the understanding of the Scriptures, and its superiority to all the aids of human learning. In this connection he related that Dr. Doddridge, when

"I am not able to ascertain, from the tenor of your letter, whether or not Satan is tempting you 'in the wilderness' with respect to your call to the ministry, or whether he has 'departed for a season.' You express, however, in both your letters, the comfort you have received from the individual application which you have been enabled to make of Isa. vi. 6-8. It is indeed a passage very full of comfort; and, although you confess that the latter part of the chapter is dark and appalling, yet it need* present no such horror to *you*. While the qualifications for the ministry—circumstances apart—must be *essentially* the same with those of the prophet, yet the tenor of the commission which is intrusted unto *us* runs in a sweeter strain:—"God hath committed unto *us* the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: now then we are ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech by us; we pray men in Christ's stead that they be reconciled unto God." Oh, what strains are these:—

" 'Tis mercy all; let earth adore;
Let angel minds inquire no more'!

Our great theme is 'Jesus Christ crucified;' our great *business* is to set him forth to men, 'evidently crucified before

composing his celebrated 'Exposition,' was accustomed, after laboring upon a difficult passage, to carry it to a poor and uneducated member of his church, whom he believed to be taught by the Holy Ghost, in order to get his opinion upon the passage in question. Speaking also of stated times for prayer, he said, 'It is good to have a fixed time and a fixed place for devotion. By the law of association, these will recall holy thoughts to the mind.' " *

* From an article by the Rev. James W. Alexander, D.D., Princeton, New Jersey: New Edit. of Life, pp. 320, 321.

their eyes;' our great *glorifying* is 'the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world.' Oh, it is *his* name which gilds the page of our commission!—it is *his* name which throws such a halo of glory around every part as to absorb *all* within its beams!—it is *his* name which contains the charm to drive away the evil spirit out of man:—

“ ‘For devils fear and fly.’

“ ‘Happy if with your latest breath

You may but gasp his name;

Preach him to all, and cry in death,

Behold, behold the Lamb!’

“I doubt not, my dear friend, that rather than refuse the offered privilege you would sacrifice your all. I doubt not but you have laid at *his* feet your health, your property, your reputation, your life itself; and that you have determined to be the servant, or, rather, as you know the term is, the *slave*, of Jesus Christ; and that nothing now is wanting to your being unreservedly given up to the service of your condescending Master but the solemn imposition of hands, to which you look forward with so much solicitude. Continue to live in the spirit of sacrifice; those things which are gain to you, count loss for Christ.”*

In the two following letters—addressed respectively to Mrs. George Warner and Mrs. Bethune—he seeks to administer consolation to the bereaved and afflicted. If he rejoiced with those who rejoiced when they were delivered from the power of sin and Satan and translated into the

* New Edit. of Life, pp. 248–250.

kingdom of God's dear Son, or when he saw their growth in grace or zeal for God, he also wept with them that wept. A child of sorrow and of pain himself, though flourishing, as he expressed himself, "unconsumed in the fire," he had, like that Jesus whom he so much loved, a heart keenly alive to the sorrows, the pains, the bereavements of others, —ever ready to give sigh for sigh, tear for tear.

The following letters happily elucidate the sympathy that ever moved his sensitive heart, and with what heavenly wisdom and tender love he administered counsel and comfort in the hour of deepest gloom and distress:—

"BALTIMORE, February 15, 1825.

"MY DEAR MRS. WARNER must not suppose, because I have not broken silence until now, that I had no sympathy with her under her late bereavement. Job's friends sat by his side upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spoke a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great. But then surely there is a fit time when the 'minister of peace' should break the seal of his commission, and fulfil its mandate:—'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God.' It would indeed be impertinent in any other than the 'Prince of life,' who was about to give back to the disconsolate widow her greatest earthly treasure, to say, 'Weep not.' Oh, no; it is permitted to us to weep, and even to sorrow many days: but, then, 'let us not sorrow as do others; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so also them that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him.' 'He is not *dead*, then, but *sleepeth*;' and Jesus will yet awake him out of sleep. He has long known that his Redeemer liveth, and that in the latter day

he should stand again upon the earth and see him eye to eye.—Him whom he loved, though he saw him not, and in whom he long rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

“Oh, how I should have desired to be with him when the shadows of time were flitting away and the glories of eternity bursting upon his open vision! Oh, how I should have longed to witness in him with what peace a Christian can die! I might have learned a lesson which is now lost to me forever. But *you* witnessed it; nay, you were the witness of his *life*, which was a *daily* lesson; the last chapter of which might be summed up in one line:—‘I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.’ He felt that for him to live was *Christ*; but now he finds that ‘to die is *gain*.’ Happy soul, thy days are ended! He has gained the prize before us; but then, although we have it not as yet, there is *laid up* for us a crown of righteousness, which the Lord will give at that day.’ And, though we should long be kept out of the possession of it, rust will not corrupt it: it is a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Oh that you and yours may gain the blissful shore as safely as he has done, without any shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience! And, O my God, *remember me*! When your feelings will permit, I should be glad to hear some particulars of the last moments of my much-beloved and never-to-be-forgotten friend. He was among *the first* of my friendships in New York, both as to my early acquaintance with him and the value I placed upon his disinterested kindness to me. I am bereaved indeed. One after another is summoned away, and I am left to hear tales of wo. It sounds like a knell unto myself:—‘Be ye also ready; for at such an hour

as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.' Farewell, my dear friend; and may He who knows how to comfort them that are in trouble pour in the oil and wine into your broken, bleeding heart!

Yours in the Lord,

"J. SUMMERFIELD."*

"BALTIMORE, January 14, 1825.

"MY DEAR MRS. BETHUNE must not suppose for one moment that my silence for so long a time has arisen from any abatement in my affections, or forgetfulness of her claims upon me. I thank God that I have often had good remembrance of you in my prayers night and day, and often have commended you to Him who is the Judge of the widow. But truly I have been a child of much affliction, and, though my spirit has been willing, the feeble state of my health has retarded me. Not that the bare writing of a letter is in *itself* a task of so great magnitude under any circumstances; but the mind sympathizes so acutely with the 'weaker vessel' as to render it at times almost impossible to surmount its sensibilities. Some time ago I wrote to Mr. H——, and therein I made mention of you, with a desire to know *how* you are and *where* you are. Mr. H—— did kindly favor me with a few lines in reply, merely to acknowledge the receipt of my letter, with a promise to write at full length in a few days. These *few* days are multiplied into many, and I have become the more anxious on *his* account also to know what is transpiring among you; for 'God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.' A few days since, I dined in company with the Rev. Mr. M——, a

* New Edit. of Life, pp. 256-258.

son of the doctor; and from him I was pleased to hear a favorable account of your beloved son George, and that he manifests much seriousness and devotedness to the sacred character to which he is preparing himself for future life. Oh, is this the case? I wish he would write to me. I keep up a sweet correspondence with Princeton College; but, strange to say, I have no correspondent in the Theological Seminary, although I sometimes think that there are several youths there upon whom I have *some* claim to be remembered.

"I trust that the mellowing hand of time has in some degree dried up the tears of your lonely widowhood. Whither he is gone 'you know, and the way you know.' He shall not return to you, but you shall go to him. Remember, the gulf is not between heaven and earth, but heaven and hell; and now that he is absent from the body, he is present with the Lord,—that Lord whom he loved when he saw him not, and whom he now sees face to face

" 'Where all the ship's company meet,
Who sail'd with their Captain beneath.'

And, O my God, shall *I* be there? And shall you be there? Yea, saith the Spirit. Yea, saith the Savior; for 'where I am, there shall my servants be.' Yea, saith the Father:—'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' Let us comfort one another with these words, and then 'to die is gain.'

"Farewell, my dear madam. Give my love to our mutual friends; and believe me, sincerely and affectionately, yours
in Christian love, JOHN SUMMERFIELD."*

CHAPTER XXI.

HIS VISIT TO TRENTON.

THE sun of Mr. Summerfield having arisen in this new hemisphere as resplendently as it did at first in Cork, the same results followed here as there: a great desire was felt in other places to listen to his inspiring eloquence; and invitations to this effect came to him from many quarters. But, while the ardor was the same as when in Ireland he went forth as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, or as a strong man rejoicing to run a race, his strength was now weakened in the way, and he must be content to measure his steps and weigh well what burden he was able to bear. But as this messenger of the churches had never yet been strictly confined long to any one place, so now does it seem to him as if he must use his remaining days to "preach the gospel" as widely as the circumstances of the case will anyway admit. Like Paul under the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit, he longed to respond to the various and urgent calls which he received, that he might "impart" to those who so anxiously desired to hear the word of the Lord at his mouth, "some spiritual gift, to the end they may be established, that he might be comforted together with them by the mutual faith both of him and them."

Let no one suppose of these visits that they were made with any view to recreation or to his own personal gratification in any form. Oh, no! not a whit more so than those of Paul. They greatly increased his burdens, and taxed yet more the little strength that remained. But he could not help himself: a voice he heard that we do not hear; a hand he saw that we do not see. His was the feeling of the great Apostle of the Gentiles when he said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise: so, as much as in me lies, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."

Going forth in this spirit,—the spirit of self-sacrifice,—wherever he went he left a flame of light behind. But it was not the flickering, momentary flame produced simply by the lustre of his eloquence: it was an impression of eternity, such as that we might be supposed to feel if suddenly the veil that hides the unseen world were withdrawn, and its amazing realities disclosed to our startled vision. Those who heard him on these occasional visits which he made to town, village, or city, still speak of him as one who did not appear to them to belong to this earth, so fully imbued was he with the Spirit of Him who came from heaven to earth not to do his own will, but the will of Him who sent him. The result was, that wherever he went believers were greatly quickened in the divine life, the hypocrites in Zion were afraid, sinners trembled under the word, and the church was built up in its most holy faith.

We may form some conception how Mr. Summerfield felt when he came to a new place, when he had a message of the Lord to deliver, from tracing the mental conflict and agony of the prophet Jonah on his way to Nineveh. or

from the feelings of Paul in Corinth. In a letter to Dr. Alexander, he says he found from first to last the preaching of the gospel to be "a crucifixion, a martyrdom, a dying daily;" and, if this was true on ordinary occasions, the burden of souls, the awful responsibility, was increased, not diminished, in a new place and among a strange people. It was not so much that he feared lest he should fall short of the highly-raised expectations of the people; but the source of ceaseless, unutterable anxiety, with this true minister of the Lord Jesus, was that souls might be saved and the name of Jesus glorified.

The writer of this work had an opportunity to observe this deep solicitude, this amazing concern, to "make full proof of his ministry" and to be "pure from the blood of all men," in the course of a visit that he made with him, during the summer of 1821, to Trenton, New Jersey; it being his object also at this time to visit Philadelphia, had he not been prevented by sickness.

We reached Trenton after a somewhat fatiguing ride from Brunswick, the road being sandy and heavy and the day hot, late in the afternoon of Saturday, Mr. Summerfield saying but little during the ride. He looked pale, feeble, careworn, and oppressed. He was evidently glad of a little opportunity for leisure and silence; especially as the day previous, on the boat from New York to New Brunswick, (a few friends accompanying him to that place,) he had all the while sought to turn every single moment to good account, speaking mainly of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Sitting on the deck, surrounded by a small circle of attached friends, who hung on every word

he uttered, he exerted himself perhaps too much; but now in the stage, unknown to all save the friend that was with him, (who watched nearly every varying shade on that dear face, and anxiously followed his movements, which indicated pain and weakness,) he sank into silence and meditation, save now and then exchanging a word or so with his young friend.

On reaching the house where we were to stay, the oppression, the weight on his mind, increased. He spoke but little; and, after a little space, on account of fatigue, he retired early to his room, touching not a morsel of food. The weight of to-morrow's task would not allow him to eat: to watch, to fast, to pray, to retire far away from communion with all but his God,—this was his Saturday-evening's preparation for the approaching Sabbath. As the Jews, previous to partaking of the paschal feast, purge out the old leaven from their houses, searching every nook and corner, that none be left, so he, in view of the message he had to deliver, sought thus early to secure the blessing of God upon his labors,—seeking by recollectedness of spirit, silence, devout prayer and meditation, by watching and fasting, to come before the people in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.

On Sabbath morning it was the same. He hardly spake a word; he ate nothing. He was burdened with his message; it was as if he went forth on a case of life and death. He felt fully the import of these words:—

“’Tis not a cause of small import
The pastor's care demands;
But what might fill an angel's heart,
Auld fill'd a Savior's hands.

“They watch for souls for whom the Lord
Did heavenly bliss forego;
For souls which must forever live
In raptures or in wo.”*

It is necessary thus to follow this servant of the living God from his closet to the pulpit to judge of the powerful effect of his preaching in Trenton, as, on Monday and Tuesday evenings successively, as well as of a Sabbath morning, with all the authority of an ambassador from the courts of heaven, he besought those who heard him on these favored occasions, in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. On the Sabbath morning he preached in the plain, small Methodist church, to a very select, highly-intelligent, but not by any means an overflowing, audience; but on Monday and Tuesday evenings he preached in the large Presbyterian church, which was filled each night in every part †

The visit was happily timed; the heat not oppressive; the evenings cool, clear, and delightful; and the moon—

* New Hymn-Book, Hymn 206.

† The Rev. Solomon Sharpe was at this time the stationed preacher in Trenton; a man of God, and whose preaching was greatly owned to the awakening and conversion of sinners. During his ministry in Trenton, one night after preaching he came down from the pulpit into the altar, no one leaving his seat, but a great awe resting on the people. After a little while, in a low, subdued, solemn tone, without loudness of voice or any extravagance of action, he said again and again,—repeating slowly the words:—“Power, my Lord! Power, my Lord!” And the power came. Sinners fell to the floor; some attempting to leave the house fell down on their passage out; many cried aloud for mercy; and the one who gave us this account gave her heart that night to God, remaining faithful to her solemn vow and covenant ever since. It was truly a night of power, of the manifestation of the right hand of the Most High.

the harvest-moon—just at its full. As the church-going bell tolled forth its sweet and welcome sound, calling, as the evening drew on, the people—young men and maidens, old men and children—to the house of prayer, 'twas pleasing to see them wending their silent way along, the hush of evening exercising its peaceful influence over the mind, but all in anxious expectation, from the loud report that had preceded him who was to speak; his way *perhaps* thereby prepared before him, and readier access found to their waiting hearts.

“Religion First:” this is his theme; this the title of this discourse.* An interest in Christ, a preparation for eternity, a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light,—this is to be secured, this object is to be attained, whatever else we fail to accomplish. Religion is not made a secondary concern, but it is of supreme, prime importance.

To this end *repentance* and *faith* are necessary. “*Repent*; cherish the conviction which God’s word suggests and the Spirit of God enforces,—that you are rebels. Let this humble you. Seek in earnest prayer the promised coming of Jesus. To this repentance and its fruits add *faith* in the *gospel*; receive Christ as able to save; when he comes to the door of your hearts, refuse not, by affected humility, because you are a sinful man. It is because of this he comes to save you; it is the reason why he comes to you as your deliverer; yea, it is the reason why you should accept him. Open to him in simple faith. Cry out, ‘Come in, my Lord;’ and he will.”†

Proposing next the encouragement to those who thus

* Luke xii. 31.

† Sermons, p. 182.

cordially, with supreme purpose and intent and in the active use of the appointed means, sought grace and glory before every thing else, he proceeds to apply his discourse to the various necessities and condition of his hearers.

And, first of all, he addresses the carnal and the worldly. He has in his introductory remarks divided men into two classes,—the carnal and the spiritual,—and distinguished them by the separate and distinct objects at which they severally aim; and now he is to make his application to each class in turn.

The carnal and the worldly ask, “What profit shall I have if I pray unto him?” The subject, “Rather seek ye the kingdom of God,” reminds those whom the god of this world hath blinded, and who are seeking death in the error of their ways, that without vigorous effort, without holy violence, they cannot be saved; that the way to hell is easy,—like going down a hill or following the stream. But, if you would have grace and glory, you must go against the stream.

He reminds this class, also, that grace and glory are not to be disparaged by them; that the “riches of glory in Christ Jesus” are not worthy the contempt with which they regard them.

He also calls into requisition their reasoning powers, their powers of comparison and analogy,—weighing the relative merit and value of different objects. And what do the carnal and the ungodly propose to themselves? “Compare the two:—a little wealth, ease, gratification, fair speeches and looks from men as mortal as themselves, and this but for a moment. And is this all for which sinners resolve to forego everlasting happiness? Yes, to

their shame be it said. This is not all: I am wrong. It may be all they *seek*. As they who seek first the kingdom of God have other things added, so they who seek the world have something added,—hell,—the flame unquenchable: all this he *adds* to those who trample on Christ.”*

Here, by sundry illustrations, he sought to show the illusive and unsatisfying nature of all worldly good;—what a bubble it was, what a cheat, what a dream. Whatever may be the object of pursuit, unless we make the glory of God and the salvation of the soul the grand concern, it will end in vanity, emptiness, and death.

Here, at his touch, one gorgeous dream of earth after another rose, (would that our memory could recall or our pen trace them!)—really and truly scenes of enchantment,—pictures of earthly glory and grandeur: glittering a while they stand, but only for a moment; repeating, as he only could repeat, the words of the poet, the whole scene of fancy and of earth passed away:—

“The cloud-capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind.”

One picture that he drew here was of Bonaparte on the island of St. Helena. The rock-girt isle rose out of the ocean, the victor in a thousand fights chained thereon; he whose word was potent to shake Europe,—whose triumphal car drew after it most of the mighty potentates of earth,—is now a prisoner; his dreams are all fled; the sound of

* Sermons, p. 183.

glory and the voice of battle and the music of the tramp of his legions hushed forever.*

He next addressed the lukewarm:—"I would not confound you with the carnal: I will give you your due. Though in a sense you are seeking, yet, as it respects the general habit of the mind, you seek it in the *second* place. You sacrifice religion to the world; this is why you have just so much religion as makes you miserable. You love it in others. Oh, shake off the dust of the earth! Awake! The conviction of your judgment is right; but let your *will* choose it. 'Lay aside every weight.' "†

In conclusion, he addressed "the tried saints." "What says the text to such? Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and he will take care of you. The best way to live to him is to think most of the other world."‡ As a cure, a sure and certain cure, against worldly cares and anxieties, he directs such to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord; to be constantly seeking for, aiming at, higher advancements in the divine life; laboring for a more perfect conformity and likeness to the will and image of God. "While

* Among the illustrations, "while alleging the insufficiency of earthly good and worldly knowledge to yield abiding happiness, he spoke of the philosopher, and exclaimed, 'Let him skip like a mountain-goat from star to star, until at last he reach that great luminary,—let all the planetary system pass before him, and let him understand all their mysteries,—let nature stand confessed in luminous simplicity, and show those things which now she holds most dear,—still there is an aching void; for, though he sees a God without, he feels him not within: still, like Alexander, though on a different occasion, he would weep tears of blood that there was not another world of science to explore.' "*

† Sermons, p. 183.

‡ Ibid. p. 184.

* "Recollections of Summerfield," by a Lady: New Edit. of Life. p. 324.

anxious about the best things," he remarked, "you will forget the paltry ones; and *eternity* will convince you of the justice of your choice."*

The next evening the church-going bell again summoned the multitude together; and, as we walked in company, with a slow step and in silent communing, to the house of God, the moon, once again robed in all her splendor, arose upon our path,—the second evening a repetition of the calm and peaceful beauty of the first.

The subject this time was, "The Divine Requisition;" the words of the text were these:—"My son, give me thine heart."†

Little can you judge of the introduction to this sermon from the few words found in the printed copy. He dwelt *in extenso* upon what was properly meant by the word "heart" in the text; speaking with thoughts weighty and words simple, but apt, expressive, well chosen, upon the heart not in the sense of flesh and blood, but as the "immortal and thinking part of man, the seat of the understanding, the will, the affections." He enlarged upon the soul, its powers, its aspirations, its destiny; the soul or the heart of man that which finds its counterpart only in God, in his spiritual, immortal, and glorious nature; the heart but another word for the man himself, with all his spiritual and rational capabilities. It is the heart that is the man; all that is of real value, all that truly constitutes the man, is concentrated here, and is given or withheld with the heart. The heart, then, is the man,—the great whole. This is what God asks, what he requires, what he demands, what

* Sermons, p. 184.

† Prov. xxiii. 26.

he *must* and *will* have,—full, complete, and entire, or else nothing. “My son, give me thine heart.”

In treating these expressive words,—this simple but absolute and imperative requisition,—he (1) *explained*, and then (2) *enforced*, the text.

A brief synopsis of this most eloquent, heart-searching, and close appeal (for this is its character: it is an appeal) can be contained in a few words. In *explaining* the text, he remarked,—It supposes that men do not naturally give their hearts to God,—that God will not *force* them to comply with his demands. Yet, further, it implies that we heartily renounce *all* that God has forbidden, that we believe all his promises, and that we seek and cleave to him constantly as our portion.

Compliance with the demand was enforced by two reasons:—one that it is just and right, and the other that it is our interest to do so.

Then followed the application. He is here in the name of his Master to ask for their hearts; he is sent to say to them that were bidden, (and this includes all,—Jews and Gentiles,) “Come, for all things are now ready.” He waits to know what answer he is to carry back to his Lord. One says, “I have given my heart long since; I am sorry I waited so long,—that I so often have backslidden in heart.” He has a word for this class.

Another is desirous of complying with the reasonable requirement: but the struggle is so great; it is a struggle as for life; it tears body and soul asunder. His answer is, “Do not despair: lift it up as thou art able; and if ‘darkness abide for a night, joy shall come in the morning.’ The Lord is nigh thee; he can loosen thy heart.

Look up: the day of redemption draweth near. Why not now? Say,—

“‘Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart: oh, take and seal it,
Seal it for thy courts above!’

Another says, “My heart? Do you desire that? Ask for my money, my tongue, my voice, my feet, my hands,—any thing and every thing but *that*.” Now “he changes his voice:” he produces his commission. Will this allow of a compromise? Is he authorized to accept as a substitute any or all of these, or all other things, in the place of the heart? You have but one thing to give,—your heart, your soul, your life. This is all that is valuable to God; and this is what he *must* and *will* have, or nothing: nothing else will suffice. Your gold: is it not his? Your voice, your tongue, the sweet music of the lips: are they not his? Your hand: whence came the cunning contrivance but from him? He wants you, not yours,—not your possessions, not your bodily gifts, organs, and endowments, not the swiftness of your feet, not the strength of your body, not your hand, tongue, or voice: he wants your heart. The bounding pulse he wishes to beat not with wild passion for the creature, but with pure, ardent, unwavering love for the Creator. The eye, speaking out with liquid glances the feelings and emotions of the heart,—he wants to glisten not in view of any mere earthly delight, not with the mere vision or prospect of any earthly good, but because we can say, “My beloved is mine, and I am his;” because our “beloved” comes “leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills;” because the night of sin and death is past,

and our "beloved" is to us—as the "day breaks and the shadows flee away"—"like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel."

He addresses another class. Here he meets with a different reception. These say, "It is right we should give our hearts to the Lord; we are not safe unless we do it, and it is kind in God to seek them." "But when? To-morrow: to-night it is impossible; in a *very* short time I will. I doubt these will perish forever. Why do people perish who hear the gospel? Is it because they never intended to give their hearts to God? No: the reason is, they put it off, sermon after sermon; almost every hearer is more or less awakened, and they see it is right. 'Now or Never' is one of Baxter's titles. What probability—in the name of God I ask it—that you will *ever* give it, if not *now*? Will he be more willing to receive it?—Satan more willing to relinquish it?—you more inclined, the longer you stay in sin, to part with it? See Felix. He trembles. The preacher's heart said, 'See how God blesses the word.' He makes signs as if going to say, 'What is it? What shall I do?' But, oh, how was the preacher's heart grieved at 'Go thy way for this time'! You may die to-night, and sink to rise no more until the resurrection."*

Mr. Summerfield received the most marked attention from every class during his brief stay in Trenton; and, though suffering all the while from sickness, (for he was attacked the day after his arrival,) he strove to entertain and edify the various company that sought his society. He was, however, evidently much depressed during the

whole of his visit. In a letter written shortly after his recovery, he refers to his feelings at this time, as his sickness increased and the medicine he used was found to be inoperative. He thus speaks of his feelings under approaching sickness:—

“While the Lord was overshadowing my dear friends at R—— with the pillar of fire and baptizing them with the Holy Ghost,* he cast darkness around my path and overshadowed me with the cloud. I must confess, ‘I feared, while entering into the cloud,’ that I should never see you more; and I was rather wishful to remain here a little longer, for the ‘furtherance and joy of faith’ of many whom I love ‘in the bowels of Jesus Christ.’”†

On Wednesday, instead of proceeding to Philadelphia, as he had purposed, he found it necessary to return to New York; and the writer of this, at his request, went on to that city to notify the friends there of his sickness. On his arrival, he found Samuel Chubbs, one of the main pillars of the Academy,‡ and father of the present Samuel Chubbs, of the same church, preparing to go to Trenton to accompany Mr. Summerfield to Philadelphia; his visit to this city thus for the present providentially deferred.§

* Referring to the camp-meeting at Rhinebeck.

† Letter to Mrs. Garretson: New Edit. of *Life*, p. 131.

‡ Now the “Union” Church of Fourth Street, Philadelphia.

§ During the course of this summer also he visited Rhinebeck, (New York,) and preached there; also Albany, where, at the request of the Rev. Dr. Lacey, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, he occupied his pulpit,—a happy instance of true Christian liberality.

CHAPTER XXII.

VISITS PHILADELPHIA, BALTIMORE, AND WASHINGTON.

IN the following spring, on his way to Baltimore, he stopped at Philadelphia, spending a little time there, and preaching, with great power and success, the gospel of the kingdom. One of the papers thus speaks of his preaching:—

“The discourses of this wonderful man are not formed upon the model of orators, ancient or modern. They are not made up according to the prescriptions of rhetoricians of great or lesser name; they owe nothing to the magnificence of words or the studied graces of manner; but they are deeply imbued with the living spirit of thought, and are dependent for their influence upon the omnipotence of truth and the irresistible energy of genius. His gestures are without affectation,—few, but fearless and appropriate.”*

Another paper speaks thus of his visit:—

“Mr. Summerfield, a clergyman from England, of the Methodist persuasion, has lately delivered several sermons in this city, which have been attended by most unexampled

* Delaware Watchman.

congregations of all denominations of Christians. He is truly powerful both in argument and eloquence. He is an able and strenuous advocate of the doctrines of Christianity."

Of the happy and saving effects of his preaching during this visit, we have the following account, in an extract from a letter addressed by Dr. Abercrombie, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, to Mr. Summerfield, dated Philadelphia, June 1, 1822:—

"The very powerful impression which the exercise of your ministry in this city has made upon the hearts of many of your hearers induces me thus to express a most ardent wish on their behalf that you would *soon* indulge us with another visit, that you may confirm and render indelible that happy effect. Much of the good seed has fallen among *thorns*, and will, I fear, become choked and unfruitful unless invigorated and nourished by your refreshing agency. Your exertions among us, sir, have been blessed with *great* success in awakening many sleepy and alarming many careless professors of Christianity; and, as a brother laborer, though a very feeble one, in the vineyard of our heavenly Master, I can no longer resist addressing to you the solicitation given to St. Paul:—‘Come over into Macedonia, and help us;’ your ‘heart’s desire and prayer to God for sinners is, that they may be saved;’ and, as the talents intrusted to you have been happily improved among us, I trust that you will be permitted by Divine Providence to *establish* the good work which you have begun, and carry it on to perfection.”*

* Large Edit. of Life, pp. 349, 350.

The following description of his preaching while in this city is from the pen of a gentleman of Philadelphia, (now far advanced in life,) who heard him, not, indeed, during his first, but last, visit. The vividness and accuracy of the picture is the same, whether it refer to his first or *final* visit. We are happy to have it in our power to insert it in full in this place:—

“About the year 1827* I was called upon in Philadelphia by a friend, who informed me the Rev. Mr. Summerfield was expected the next morning (Sunday) to preach in the Methodist church in Fourth Street. ‘He is,’ said he, ‘a young but a very extraordinary man; come early, or I fear you will not get even standing-room.’

“I went early, as requested; but even then, early as it was, and unexpected as had been the arrival of the preacher, the church was filling fast. The people, men and women, with quick steps and in large masses, were pressing forward and eagerly entering into the house of prayer. All descriptions of persons hurried forward, and were alike fearful lest they should be crowded out. There was no complimentary holding back, no precedence given. Those who were in advance endeavored to keep so, and those in the rear did not scruple to *kibe the heels* of those before them, if they could thereby more certainly obtain a place in the church. I had the good fortune to obtain a front-seat in the gallery. When standing in the pulpit, the preacher appeared to be rather above than below where I sat. Mr. Summerfield, I understand, was then not more than two- or three-and-twenty years of age, and looked much younger.

* It was in the year 1824.

There was nothing light, vain, or worldly in his appearance.

“Among the finest specimens of the British arts is one of Flaxman’s, illustrative of the words, ‘Thy will be done.’ It is an exquisitely-beautiful female figure, seated with open, elevated hands, the palms gently laid together, and upraised eyes; the very folds in her garments seem expressive of entire resignation to the behests of her divine Master. Yet the impression made by the figure and countenance of Mr. Summerfield set at naught this most perfect embodiment of heavenly resignation which genius had ever executed. He brought before the mind’s eye the figure usually given of that disciple whom Christ loved. There were three or four other ministers in the pulpit with Mr. Summerfield. While they went through the service preparatory to the sermon, I could and did at my leisure note him who was ‘the observed of all observers.’ The youthful, saintlike expression not only of his face but of his whole delicate figure, and the high reputation which had preceded him, had prepossessed the minds and hearts—yea, the very spirits—of all beholders, insomuch that they waited in breathless anxiety, watching his every movement, anxiously waiting to hear the sound of his voice. I am not portraying individual feelings, but shadowing forth those of a large congregation. It seems even to me that what I have just written savors of exaggeration; yet I am certain that if I had sketched my feelings thirty years ago, the picture would have had more warmth of coloring and been more lifelike. Every eye was inquiringly and expectingly directed toward the pulpit, and many an eye was bedewed with religious feeling. Every look, every motion

of Mr. Summerfield gave birth to new and indefinable expectations. The church service—in which Mr. Summerfield took no part—being concluded, there was a gentle restlessness in the congregation, a settling of themselves quietly in their seats, and a putting of themselves in the best possible position to see and hear. A wavelike motion, passing over the whole congregation, gave strong indications of the feelings of the mass who were before and on each side of him. All anxious hopes, all intensity of feeling, must fade before the fervency which is felt by a congregation of sincere, warm-hearted Christians, when assembled to pray, to praise and glorify the God of their salvation; they look as though they had a foretaste of the bread of eternal life and were enjoying that highest of earthly enjoyments,—they being borne on angels' wings,—while they give ear to the fervently-pious and hope-inspiring language which flows from the lips of a highly-gifted and eloquent minister of the living God. Such were the hopes and feelings agitating the bosoms of that congregation of which I was one. I have heard pulpit-orators of the first order of many religious denominations, and have at times been more moved, more awfully impressed,—shall I say more spiritually awakened?—than I was on this occasion in the Methodist church; yet I was there in a tranquil, hopeful, delightful frame of mind. My best feelings, my highest anticipations and most blissful hopes, all that was good and promising within me, was in the highest state of enjoyment. It does not often happen that congregations, large assemblies of men and women, are so entirely spiritualized as was that congregation while listening to the mild, sweet, and persuasive eloquence of this young divine. He died

within a few months after he had thus been heard and seen and felt.”*

His last discourse during this visit in Philadelphia was delivered of a week-day morning, in Dr. Wilson’s church, Washington Square, in presence of most of the clergy, and to a congregation of at least four thousand persons. The text was Heb. iv. 14:—“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.”†

From Philadelphia he proceeded to Baltimore, reaching that city about six o’clock, Saturday evening, greatly fatigued, having travelled the whole of the time, except about two hours, both night and day. Of this journey he says, “The road was good, except about fifty miles of it, which was indeed intolerable. However, I am in good health, thank God, and quite recruited.”‡

* “Recollections of the Life of John Binns,” p. 34. Philadelphia: printed and for sale by the Author, and by Parry & McMillan. 1854.

† This sermon he preached also in Princeton, New Jersey, in the Presbyterian church. Dr. Alexander, who heard it, says it “is the same of which the outline is preserved in Dr. Bond’s collection, No. 79, entitled, ‘A Friend at Court.’ But this sketch,” he says, “however interesting in itself, can convey no idea of the fulness, the rapidity, or the glowing amplification of the discourse. In this, as in all his sermons, he was remarkable for the quick succession of new thoughts. Summerfield did not say every thing, and he did not weary. Not only did he not dwell very long on any point, but, after presenting it most vividly, he immediately and most adroitly glided to another, keeping up a sparkling current of perpetual change. The discourse comprised a brief but able vindication of the divinity of our Lord.”*

‡ Letter to Mr. Blackstock, dated Baltimore, March 5, 1822.

Having arrived in Baltimore, he found a home with Mr. S. Harden, who, he said, "received him with an *Irish welcome*."

He thus speaks of his reception in this city:—

"My reception here has been highly grateful to my feelings as a Methodist. The attention shown me by all ranks is more than I can well bear; but the Lord supports me. Indeed, I feel in a very unpleasant situation in a certain degree. When I came to New York I was unknown, and whatever favor, therefore, the Lord gave me in the eyes of the people, was more than was calculated upon; but here fame has preceded me, and blown a very loud trumpet indeed. Many expect from me, I almost think, something more than human; and, as all such must inevitably be disappointed, I stand upon very unequal ground from my situation in New York: *there* they expected *nothing*; *here* they expect *every thing*."*

Greatly fatigued as he was with his ride, yet on Sabbath morning he preached in Light Street Church to a great multitude.

A writer in one of the Baltimore city papers thus speaks of his appearance in the pulpit and of the effect of his prayers:—

"The youth and apparent debility of the speaker, the deferent and solemn manner in which he performed the initiatory services of divine worship, and, above all, the chaste and fervent simplicity of his appeal to the Eternal, swept away all prejudice, and opened every heart and every eye to the truth and 'beauty of holiness.'"[†]

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 195.

† Poulson's "American Advertiser.

The same writer, speaking of his sermon, thus describes it :—

“His sermon was beyond comparison superior to any thing the writer ever heard, although he has enjoyed opportunities of hearing with no careless ear many faithful and able ministers of the word. It was not of that declamatory kind which is calculated to excite the feelings of a promiscuous assembly, nor of that subtle and metaphysical texture which involves the most vigorous intellects and perplexes the plainest truths; it was, on the contrary, a happy union of argument and entreaty, seeking to convince and ‘persuade men’ of propositions distinctly stated, cogently enforced, and happily illustrated by natural and felicitous imagery. It was the outpouring of a full heart seeking to disburden itself of the awful responsibility of its station, and to give vent to the ‘glad tidings’ of the gospel as the Spirit gave it utterance.”*

After preaching through the week in various places with great acceptability, the churches literally “crammed,”† and most of the clergy of the city among his delighted and edified hearers,‡ on Friday he left, in Mr. Foxall’s carriage,—Mr. Foxall and wife accompanying him,—for Washington.

Arriving in Washington on Saturday afternoon, after an

* Poulson’s “American Advertiser.”

† Bishop Emory.

‡ After one of his sermons, Dr. Glendy said to Bishop Emory, “Well, we have had a gospel feast, and in the first style of elegance.”*

easy and agreeable ride of two days,* he preached in that city on Sunday morning at the Foundry Chapel. Among those present this Sabbath morning, in addition to a large number of members of both houses of Congress, were John Quincy Adams, the (*then*) Secretary of State, and John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War.

Of his discourse on this occasion he himself thus speaks, (he is writing to his brother-in-law :)—

“As you may suppose, I directed my attention to subvert the principles of Unitarianism which have unhappily found their way into Congress through the ministry of Mr. Sparks. I had unusual liberty and boldness, with great freedom of speech. The Lord stood by me, and I shunned not to declare all the counsel of God, with what effect I know not : I leave that with the Lord.”†

The following Sabbath he preached on the steps of the Capitol, the crowd being so great that the hall of the House of Representatives could noway contain them. He thus describes the scene :—

“On last Sabbath I intended to have preached in the Capitol at Washington ; but, when I went, the crowd was so immense that I took my stand on the lofty steps in front of the house, and preached in the open air. I cannot tell you how many were assembled on foot ; but the sight was very imposing, being flanked in by several lines of carriages filled with company, who retained their seats and listened with great attention, so that I infer I was heard to the extremity. The wind was somewhat in my face, and

* The distance from Baltimore to Washington is only thirty-six miles.

† Letter to Mr. Blackstock. dated Georgetown, March 13.

rendered the exertion greater; and I contracted some hoarseness consequently.”* His text on this occasion was, —“We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.”

One of the city papers thus refers to him :—

“If we are to form an opinion of his merits by his popularity as a preacher, the eagerness to hear him has scarcely been equalled since the days of his pious predecessor, George Whitefield.”†

Having thus spent two Sabbaths in Washington, delivering his soul by his fidelity to his God and great plainness of speech, he left this city on Monday for Alexandria, at which place he preached that evening. From Alexandria he went to Georgetown, and preached in the Presbyterian (Dr. Baltch's) church. This sermon gave rise to the following notice of him :—

“Mr. Summerfield is a young gentleman of no ordinary capacity, and his oratorical powers render him an object of deep and lively interest. When he becomes animated, he appears as if the very *breathings of the Spirit* were on him, and his countenance is lighted with a fire bright and holy, like that which appeared to Moses on Mount Horeb. His action and enunciation are chaste; his voice is rather weak, but is quite melodious, and its intonations inconceivably fine. His face wears the aspect of a youth not out of his teens, but is modest and unassuming.”‡

* Letter to Mr. Blackstock, dated Annapolis, (he was here on an invitation from Bishop Emory,) March 25, 1822.

† Washington City Gazette.

‡ Metropolitan and Georgetown National Messenger.

From Georgetown he returned on Thursday to Baltimore, having to deliver an address before the Missionary Society on the following evening.

The evening having arrived, the church was crowded to excess. Bishop Emory, at the close of his own speech, thus introduced Mr. Summerfield to the meeting:—"I will not detain you longer. I know the anxiety of the audience to enjoy the rich feast that is to follow, and I wish to enjoy it with them. We have reserved the best wine to the last."

"The youthful Summerfield,"—it is Dr. Bond,* as we judge, that gives this account,—"perfectly cool and collected, arose; he cast his eyes over that immense congregation, and then exclaimed,—

"What means this flourish of trumpets? Who is this John Summerfield whose name is bandied through the land? A lad, a mere lad of yesterday, with his "five barley-loaves and two small fishes; and what are they among so many?" But the gentleman says he has reserved the best wine till the last. This is inverting the order of the feast:—"Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and, when men have well drank, then that which is worse;" but I have not the worse wine to offer you: mine is mere water. But, if the Master of the feast should deign to touch the water and turn it to wine, it may be the very best wine; but, recollect, my friends, the excellency would not be of man, but of God.' He then proceeded with his address," adds the doctor, "in his usual inimitable manner."

After a brief visit to Annapolis, according to previous arrangement with Bishop Emory, Mr. Summerfield returned

* Late editor of the "Christian Advocate and Journal."

to New York, carrying with him the tenderest remembrances, glad to find quiet and retirement once more in his little room in Cortland Street.

The following extract from a letter to S. Harden, dated New York, April 25, will close this chapter,—hardly any thing left now to note but the sound of his departing footsteps,—his voice dying away in the blue ethereal, and his spirit soon to ascend there. Thus he writes:—

“Oh that my gracious Lord would cause all the plenitude of his grace to abound in your soul! It is yours; it has been purchased; claim it through the right of Jesus, and take all the fulness of that which heaven waits to pour into the heart of him who asks, believing that he has the very petitions which he *asks* through the name of the Advocate with the Father. I will endeavor to multiply words at the throne of grace in your behalf, that you may enjoy all the fulness of the blood-bought salvation.”*

* New Edit. of Life, p. 144.

The following extract closes a letter to Dr. Samuel Baker, showing what lively remembrance his affectionate heart had of all the members of the whole family. This letter is of the same date as the other, both being written on the same day:—“And Mrs. D——: is she well? My little sons and daughters: how are they? Tell William I expect great, great things from him, and trust he will not disappoint me. Remember me affectionately to Mr. and Mrs. W—— and their family. When any of you see poor Mrs. G——, (*rich* Mrs. G——, for she is an heiress of the kingdom,) give her my warmest affection. Remember me to Mrs. C—— also: thank her most affectionately for her little treasure, and say I am sorry she kept it back until I had not an opportunity of expressing my gratitude in person. There are many other members of that family to whom I should wish to be remembered; but, as you know them all, you can make up the deficiency.”*

* New Edit. of Life, p. 145.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SICKNESS AT PHILADELPHIA—LEAVES FOR EUROPE.

ON his return to New York, he continued to labor as usual until the Conference in June, when (if we recollect aright) he was reappointed to the city for the ensuing year.*

After Conference, in company with Bishop McKendree, (a man of simple, apostolic manners,) he set out to pay a second visit to Philadelphia; but he had hardly reached that city when he was taken with a violent hemorrhage of the lungs, and on the 11th of June he was given up by his physicians, and it was expected a few hours would terminate his life. But it pleased the Lord to raise him up once more, though his health continued in a very precarious state, and he was wholly unable to exercise his ministry.

He thus speaks of his partial restoration to health:—

“I begin to entertain serious apprehensions it will improve no more. I think I have the prospect of a lingering decline, not unlike that of my dear mother. I wish I could add that I had also the prospect of the same triumphant end. On this subject I am very low.”†

* In his “Life” no reference is made to this.

† Large Edit. of Life, p. 214.

During his sickness, the greatest interest was manifested in him; and, both in New York and Philadelphia, daily announcements of his health were made in the public papers.

"There is no better proof," said one of these, "of the lofty estimation in which this gentleman's character and talents are held, than the intense anxiety which has been manifested for his recovery. We recollect no instance of the kind in which public sympathy has been so warmly engaged, or in which the danger of one individual has produced so lively a sensation upon the general mind."*

When somewhat restored, he went, by the recommendation of his physician, (Dr. Physic,) to New Mills, (New Jersey,) to try the effect of the air and water, but not with any particular results. It was therefore thought best that he should try the effects of an entire change of air, climate, and scene, to restore, if possible, his health; and a voyage to the West Indies was recommended, but was afterward changed in favor of one to Europe.

In October he returned once more to New York, leaving this city, and all he held so dear in it, on Christmas-day, in the ship "Six Brothers," Captain Mason, bound to Marseilles.†

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 213.

† Captain Williams, one of the owners of the vessel, gave Mr. Summerfield a free passage. In the following extract of a letter written by him to this gentleman, dated December 22, 1823, he refers to this:—

"I have never thought of you but with affection; and I have wondered what could have moved your unmerited kindness to me, who was altogether a stranger to you. It was not the 'friendship of the world:' this induces every man to look on *his own things* only, and weigh accurately the profit that would accrue

From Marseilles, in due time, he proceeded to Paris, having been appointed a delegate from the American Bible Society to the Protestant Bible Society of France. Having spent the winter in France, and attended the meeting of the Bible Society, which was held in Paris in the month of April,* he crossed the Channel to England. In June of this year he attended the British Conference in Sheffield, and was treated with great respect.†

"After his return," says his biographer, "from Sheffield, and having visited, among other places, Frodsham, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, and Runcorn, he took up his residence with Anthony Badley, Esq., a gentleman of piety and fortune, then residing at Weston Hill, near the latter place. While under the roof of his kind entertainer, a portrait was painted of this 'in every respect *extraordinary young man*,' as Summerfield is justly designated by Mr. Badley."‡

from every transaction; but your *disinterested* kindness bears a higher stamp than nature ever impressed. I see in it the counterpart of an apostle's doctrine:—'Loving *Him* that begat, we love *them* also that are begotten of him;' and, unworthy as I am to be accounted a disciple of our common Lord, yet you have done what you *have* done in regard to this relationship."*

He also entertained the liveliest regard for Captain Mason, "who," he says, "was every thing to him" during the voyage "that he could wish,—a father, a nurse, a servant."†

* His address delivered before the Bible Society in Paris was received with the greatest applause, and a fitting answer made by M. Billing, one of the secretaries of the Society.

† At this Conference the Rev. Richard Reece and the Rev. John Hannah were appointed delegates to attend the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to be held at Baltimore the ensuing year, (1824.)

‡ Large Edit. of Life, p. 285.

* Large Edit. of Life, pp. 227, 228.

† Ibid. p. 223.

As winter drew on, he removed, with his kind host, Mr. Badley, from Weston Hill to Linore. "A more delightful spot," says Mr. Summerfield, "I could not have chosen."

Of his health in England during the summer and winter he thus speaks:—

"My health is much as when I wrote last. The good Physician still holds me in life, though with a slender thread. I do not yet know the end of his dealings with me in this respect; but he is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind. He will do all things well. I cannot promise myself *long* life, as far as human reasoning directs, though with God all things are possible. All my desire is, that I may yet stand before him in his sanctuary a little longer, to point poor sinners to the scene on Calvary,—the bleeding Jesus."*

"Since my last I remain much as usual; indeed, I am like a '*creaking* gate,' whose hinges are half consumed, but yet hangs on."†

"On the 16th of March, 1824," says his biographer, "he bade farewell—alas! a *final* farewell—to England, and embarked on board the '*Orbit*,' Captain Jinkham, and on the 19th of April arrived in New York."‡

* Letter to S. Harden, dated Liverpool, July 10, 1823.

† Letter to Mr. Blackstock, dated February 14, 1824.

‡ Large Edit. of Life, p. 293. While in England, on Sunday, the 22d of June, he preached, for the first time since his arrival, in Leeds Street Chapel, Liverpool; and, toward the latter end of the year, he opened a handsome new chapel at Bilston, in Suffolk. Of his first sermon he says, "It is the *first time* since my arrival in England; and yet, although I name this to show you I am not *quite dead*, you must not infer, because I have *begun*, I will continue. No: it will be *very, very, very* seldom repeated, and I shall always inform you when it is."*

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 278.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HIS CLOSING LABORS.

MR. SUMMERFIELD had hardly reached the shore, with, "contrary to all his expectations, a slight degree of improved health," before he recommenced his labors, as if indeed fully purposed to die in the field.

"Three days after his arrival, he attended the anniversary of the Missionary Society," (we suppose the "Young Men's" Missionary Society, of which he was President;) "and, on the Sunday following, he preached at Brooklyn, New York, to an overflowing congregation."*

On the 1st of May he left for Baltimore, stopping at Philadelphia on his way, to preach. "His emotions may be better conceived than described, on being thus permitted once more to hold forth the word of God in the city where two years before his life had been despaired of. Great as had been his former popularity, he still found the Philadelphians his 'unchangeable friends:' his reception was equal to his expectations."†

The General Conference was now sitting in Baltimore, and, in the course of it, Mr. Summerfield was ordained

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 293.

† Ibid. p. 294.

elder, he having been ordained deacon two years before in the city of New York. He thus speaks of this:—

“I was presented by my valued friend and brother (now my bishop) Soule; and he, with Mr. E. Cooper, F. Garretson, and Josiah Wells, assisted in the laying on of hands. To describe my feelings is impossible: it was a day never to be forgotten. I renewed my vows unto the Lord in the presence of the most august assembly I ever expect to meet on this side of heaven.”*

During his absence in Europe, Mr. Summerfield had been appointed “a missionary within the bounds of the Baltimore Conference;” and now on his return, owing to the precarious state of his health, this relation was continued, with full and free permission “to visit any part to the north of the Baltimore Conference in summer, and to the south in the winter season,” as his physicians might recommend.†

Mr. Summerfield, toward the close of May, returned to New York, “exhausted in body, depressed in mind, but confiding in the God of providence and grace.”

On Sunday, the 6th of June, he preached in Brooklyn at the dedication of a new Methodist church; and, on the following Sunday, in John Street, New York. Of the services of this day he says,—

“I never remember so gracious a time under my feeble ministry.”‡

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 294. Mr. Summerfield preached during the session of the General Conference. Bishop Morris says, (as a friend of his has told us,) he had read but a verse or two of the hymn before his eyes, and the eyes of all, were suffused with tears.

† Letter of Bishop McKendree to Mr. Summerfield, dated Baltimore, May, 1824.

‡ Large Edit. of Life, p. 298.

In the month of August of this summer he made a missionary excursion northward, passing through New York State into Vermont, and so to Montreal, in Canada, preaching at various places, and taking up collections in aid of the missions.*

On his way back he preached at Poughkeepsie *twice*. Of this he says,—

“This is the first venture of the kind I have made since my hemorrhage in 1822. I found myself so far improved by this my journey, that I was less fatigued than I had been by preaching *once* on the first Sabbath at Middlebury. In the afternoon I accepted the offer of the Reformed Dutch ohurch,—being the most spacious in town.”†

He thus records his return to New York after an absence of five weeks:—

“Next day I took my departure for New York, where I arrived safely on Tuesday, the 31st instant. My health is now better than it has been for some years, so that I am persuaded this journey is of God.”‡

On the 15th of September he left New York again for Philadelphia, reaching this city on Saturday, the 18th; “and on the following Sunday preached to an immense multitude.”§

Having made an arrangement to that effect with the

* On this excursion he preached at Middlebury, Burlington, and Montreal. Of Burlington he thus speaks:—“I preached in the Socinian church at their earnest request. I bless God that I had courage sufficient not to prevent me from keeping back any part of the counsel of God.”*

† Large Edit. of Life, p. 301.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid. p. 303.

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 300.

Missionary Board of the Philadelphia Conference, in company with the Rev. J. Sargeant, he visited various places within the States of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, forming auxiliary societies and taking up collections in aid of the missions. On this missionary tour he preached in the following places:—Westchester, Churchtown, New Holland, Harrisburg, Marietta, Reading, and Joanna. He returned to Philadelphia on the 15th of October.

After a short visit to New York, he set out for Baltimore, with the view of spending the winter in that city. The following is his first entry after his return to Baltimore:—

“November 4.—Preached in Light Street for the first time since my return. I am now comfortably settled here. Nothing can exceed the kindness of Dr. Baker and his family: their love to me is wonderful. My God, do thou remember them!”*

On Christmas-day, “I preached,” he says, “to the colored people in Sharpe Street, and the word came with great power.”

“Sunday, December 26.—Heard Mr. Bascum in the morning, and preached myself in the afternoon at Mr. Nevin’s, from 1 Cor. xvi. 22. My strength now seemed entirely gone.”†

On the following evening he was carried to Mr. Henshaw’s church to address the anniversary meeting of the Young Men’s Bible Society. During the meeting he was in great pain, and, as soon as he had spoken, was obliged to be carried home.

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 304.

† Ibid. pp. 308, 309.

CHAPTER XXV.

HIS LAST SICKNESS AND DEATH.

THE 31st of January, the reader will recollect, was Mr. Summerfield's birthday. The last had now come; and he makes this record:—

“January 31.—This is my birthday. Time strikes a solemn knell this day to me. It may mean, ‘This year thou shalt die.’ I am truly surprised that I am so little alive to this interesting season. My birthday was always an uncommon event in my estimation, and my feelings were peculiar; but, oh, how my spirit groans beneath a cumbersome load of weakness and affliction, and how little are my spiritual enjoyments! O Lord, revive thy work!”*

He, however, still continued to preach. Under date of February 18 we have this entry:—

“Sunday.—Preached this morning in Caroline Street, on

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 318. A little before, in reference to his spiritual enjoyments, he had said, “My mind has been for some time in *great darkness*. I seem to have gone clean out of the way. I have no light. The new year opened propitiously to many; but, ah me! that day was as the former.” The darkness that was around the mind of this dear man of God, and which, at intervals, was continued even to the end, did not affect his *faith* in God. This remained firm and unshaken,—as an anchor cast within the vail, both sure and steadfast.

Isa. i. 10. I believe it was made a general blessing. This evening I had a most profitable fireside conversation with the kind family with whom I reside. Their love to me is wonderful. Lord, remember them for good!"*

The afternoon of the same day on which he preached himself, he "heard," he says, "a profitable discourse from Brother Wells, on 'Consider one another, to provoke to love,' &c. His remarks on the words 'Consider one another' I hope never to forget. Consider the age, the constitutional temper, the educational impressions, &c. Oh, if we considered one another more, how it would lead us tenderly to *caution, advise, reprove* one another in love; and how little of evil-speaking would there be, were these solemn words impressed on us:—'With what measure ye mete,' &c. God will fulfil this to us. 'Tis awful!"†

This was the last entry he made in his diary.

In March he was summoned to New York by the sickness of his father, which, it was thought, would prove fatal. He left Baltimore, thinking he would ere long return to friends and a city he loved so well. But he returned no more. He was seen by these loved friends for the last time.

The sickness of Mr. Summerfield's father did not prove fatal, as it was thought; but Mr. Summerfield himself was taken sick, having previously, "by the advice of a physician who called to pay him a friendly visit," removed from the country (where his father lay sick) to the city,—to his former home in Cortland Street. Here he was confined "to his room and bed about a month, after which he was so far recovered as to be able occasionally to ride or walk out."‡

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 314.

† Ibid. p. 315.

‡ Ibid. p. 322.

"During this short interval of temporary convalescence," he attended the formation of the American Tract Society, and delivered his last speech.*

A few days after this, and only the very day before he designed to leave for Baltimore, his physician,† upon a careful examination of his case, amid the various symptoms that presented themselves, pronounced *dropsy* to be the most formidable,—which proved to be the case. The next day he was laid upon a sick-bed, from which he was to rise no more.

A few of his dying remarks we will now give:—

"The glory of the church,—the glory of the church of New York!" he exclaimed; "her walls shall be salvation, and her gates praise!"

One morning, while enduring great bodily pain, he said,—

"Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life!"

In respect to his recovery, at one time he said,—

"Oh, if I might be raised again! *How I could preach!* I could preach as I never preached before. *I have taken a look into eternity.*"

On one occasion, when a cup was handed him to take a drink, he looked round upon his friends, and, smiling upon them severally, said,—

"On you, on me, on all, be given
The bread of life which comes from heaven."†

About ten days before his death, he was visited by Bishop

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 322.

† Marinus Willett, M.D.

‡ Large Edit. of Life, pp. 323, 324, 325, 327.

Soule. The interview was a most affecting one. As the bishop took leave, Mr. Summerfield said,—

“Bishop, farewell! If I do not meet you again on earth, meet me in heaven.”*

“Within the last three days of his life he appeared to be no stranger to his approaching dissolution. On the 11th of June he requested his sister would have *mourning prepared*.”†

The day before he died he was quite restless. Once he said, “I wish for a change.” When asked what he meant, he replied, “I want a change,—a change of *form*, a change of *every thing*.”‡

His last words were addressed to his eldest sister, Ellen. She was retiring for the night, having just given him a drink, which was his last. “She gave him a kiss, and said, ‘Good-night;’ to which he replied, ‘Good-night.’ These were his last words.”§

About four o’clock in the morning, a change being discovered to have taken place, his friends were called together, and remained standing around his bed until his spirit ascended to our Father and his Father, to our God and his God, without one convulsive struggle or a groan. His death occurred at twelve minutes past eleven on the forenoon of the 18th of June, 1825.

His funeral took place on the next day, (Tuesday,) from the house of Dr. Beekman. The body was carried first to John Street Church, where a discourse was delivered by the Rev. J. Birch, closing with prayer by the

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 327. The love of Bishop Soule to Mr. Summerfield was very great, and so was the love of Mr. Summerfield to him.

† Large Edit. of Life, p. 329.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid. p. 336.

Rev. H. Chase. The procession crossing to Brooklyn, his remains were placed beside those of the Rev. William Ross, in Sand Street Church burial-place; Dr. N. Bangs reading the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, and concluding the solemn services by reading the ritual for the dead.

It is hardly necessary to say that the greatest interest was manifested,—clergymen of various denominations attending his funeral, and the streets through which the long procession passed greatly crowded. His merits were highly spoken of in the public papers; the press, wherever he was known, was unanimous in its expression.

The inscription on his tombstone was written by the Rev. J. N. Danforth, of Newcastle, (a minister of the Presbyterian Church,) and was indeed a most just and eloquent tribute to his memory. The following words from the inscription we copy:—

“Upon the lips that moulder beneath this marble, thousands hung in silent wonder; his element was not the breath of fame, but the communion and favor of God.”*

In front of the church in John Street, near the western corner, another monument—“a beautiful cenotaph”—was erected to his memory by the Young Men’s Missionary Society, of which, at the time of his death, Mr. Summerfield was President. The tribute on this monument to his memory was written by Bishop Soule. From this tribute we copy the following words:—

“The learned and the illiterate attended his ministry with admiration, and felt that his *preaching* was in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”†

* Large Edit. of Life, p. 334.

† Ibid. p. 336.

Illustrations of his Preaching.

WE propose, in what follows, to give a few illustrations of his preaching. The following is from the pen of a lady:—

“The sketch by —— has brought the sainted Summerfield vividly before me. Well do I remember his reading of the hymn that writer refers to; but it was not when reading it to his audience that he invested it with its peculiar power. The influence was felt when he quoted it in prayer. After having, in tones of most earnest supplication, implored God to

“Take my soul and body’s powers;
Take my memory, mind, and will,
All my goods and all my hours,
All I know and all I feel,
All I think, or speak, or do:
Take my heart, but make it new,”

his whole manner would change, and, in the joyful exultation of assured victory, he would exclaim,—

“Now, my God, thine own I am;
Now I give thee back thine own!
Freedom, health, and friendly fame,
Consecrate to thee alone!
Thine I live, thine happy I;
Happier still, if thine I die.”

“I have heard Mr. Summerfield introduce another verse with great effect in the following manner. Describing the adoration of the heavenly host, he would say.—

“Worthy the Lamb that died, they cry,
To be exalted thus;—

but angel-powers were not competent to finish the verse; no: it was left for man—for fallen man—to complete the stanza, and say,—

“Worthy the Lamb that died, *we* cry
For he was slain for *us*!”*

The same writer gives the following sketch:—

“While preaching from the text, ‘If a man believe my saying, he shall not see death,’ he introduced part of Pope’s Address of the Dying Christian to his Soul, commencing at—

“What is this absorbs me quite?”

and when he came to the line,—

“Lend, lend your wings; I mount, I fly!

hundreds of his audience rose involuntarily from their seats; and the close of the quotation found them standing on their feet, with their heads inclining toward the preacher, and their eyes riveted upon that youthful being, who seemed to have naught of humanity about him save the fetters he was so soon to drop.”*

Dr. Marinus Willett gives us the following figure, which was introduced at the close of a discourse delivered in Dr. Lacey’s Protestant Episcopal church, Albany, New York:—

“He described a large vine whose branches extended in several directions; the different vine-dressers had built their walls around their branches. If you enter the separate enclosures and taste the fruit, you will find the various modes of culture and training have produced a difference in the flavor; by-and-by the great Vine-gatherer will come and collect all the fruit from these many enclosures, and press them in the *common wine-press*; then it will be impossible to distinguish any difference. A few years ago, he said, these party-walls were so high that he could not look over them; but *now* he had absolutely leaped over them.”†

Dr. Bethune gives the following striking and pleasing illustration:—

“Preaching one morning in the Allen Street Methodist church, upon Rom. viii. 38, 39, he wished to define and illustrate Christian confidence. He did it in this way:—“You remember Peter, when he was imprisoned, chained between two soldiers. The church was praying in tears, wondering what would become of them if their strong champion was taken from them. The enemies of God on earth and the devils in hell were rejoicing that they had Peter in their power. The angels in heaven, ever intent upon the mysteries of Providence in redemption, were sending down to see what the Lord would do with Peter. When heaven and earth and hell were thinking of Peter, what were Peter’s thoughts? What was Peter doing? *Peter was asleep.*”†

We have also the following characteristic marks of his preaching from the same pen:—

“Summerfield was too honest to check the exclamations that rose flowing from his heart to his lips at the gracious wonders of divine truth. Like the ardent Paul, the name of Jesus, a sight of the cross, a glimpse of the glory that shall be revealed, made him cry out in subdued and holy ecstasy; or, as the

* New Edit. of Life, p. 325. From the same source we are reminded of the manner in which he asked the blessing of the Lord at table. As we read the words, the well-known *sound* of his voice—as if, after so many years, we had heard it just now—was distinctly recalled to our memory. “I trace,” she says, “the vivid appreciation I have of temporal blessings, and my power to thank God for ‘a grateful heart, that tastes those gifts with joy,’ to a blessing which he asked at our tea-table in those my youthful days. He said, ‘May we receive the food before us with gratitude, remembering that all these *common* blessings are most *uncommon* mercies, and that temporal equally with spiritual gifts are the dear-bought purchase of the blood of Christ.”*

† New Edit. of Life, p. 295.

‡ Ibid. p. 317.

thought of souls perishing in sin pressed upon his soul, he would break his order with an earnest ejaculation. 'Would to God!' 'Oh that God!' 'God grant!' were frequent from his lips, not carelessly, but with an emphasis of devotion none could doubt.*

Dr. J. W. Alexander, speaking of his preaching, says, "One of his illustrations, in which he represented an execution, and the crowd opening to a horseman bearing a reprieve, was graphic, and never to be forgotten."

The same writer has the following:—

"It was my happiness to hear Mr. Summerfield, on a second visit to Princeton, in the summer of 1824. Alas! he was at this time enfeebled by disease, and no longer blooming in the vigor of his first appearance in America. His visage was pallid and his voice was much injured; yet he preached with uncommon power, and with a tenderness and awe which abundantly made up for any lack of vivacity. His subject was 'Isaiah's Vision,' Isa. vi. 1-8. (See Dr. Bond's Collection, No. 23, p. 165.) He rose above himself, and seemed to see heaven opened, as with a seraphic glow he caught the adoring song,—'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.' Well do I remember, after so many years, the delightful transition, when, from depicting the awful glories of God's unapproachable majesty, in the temple 'filled with smoke,' he passed to the 'Lamb in the midst of the throne,' as the reconciling sacrifice."†

We ourselves recollect one of his illustrations, introduced in a sermon delivered in Duane Street Church in the course of the summer or fall of 1821: it was that of the *prophet Elijah and the ravens*.

'Twas of a Sabbath evening; but the services, we recollect well, commenced early, so that during the introductory exercises of singing and prayer daylight had not yet departed. As he was giving out the first hymn, the last gleams of the setting sun sent their rich glow into the church, lighting now in masses like liquid gold on the upturned faces of the living multitude, then streaming in quivering rays through aisle and gallery, dotting also as with ruby or sapphire hue the pulpit, flickering round and illumining the face of the inspired speaker.

Inspired! Never more so than on this occasion. The prayer that fell from the lips of this sainted servant of the Most High, we never knew even him to utter such another. Such sublimity of thought and expression, such language, was never heard save from lips touched, as Isaiah's, with a live coal taken from off the altar. The vision that Isaiah saw seemed, as he prayed, to open to his view. Sentence followed sentence, each following sentence sublimer than the last. He appeared to be lost to earth. He was rapt,—lost in the vision of the Almighty. It was as if the language fell from heaven; as if it was "given" to him. He could scarcely close, so glorious the vision that was passing before him. Such a view as he had then of the holiness of God, of his ineffable splendor, majesty, and greatness, how can it be expressed? All heaven engaged in praising God,—seraphim and cherubim glorifying and praising God.

* New Edit. of Life, p. 314.

† Ibid. p. 320.

Never perhaps did earth see a closer approximation to prophetic inspiration. The whole scene lives to-day as then,—with the unearthly glow that contended with the richness of departing day's richest beams on that inspired face. Hushed into the profoundest stillness was the vast crowd,—the mellow tones of that sweet voice, in such strains as earth scarcely ever hears, subduing all hearts, moving man's inmost nature,—God speaking and man for *once* listening. Still as an assembly of the dead was the huge living mass,—not a sound heard, awe the deepest felt, scarcely one there daring to breathe freely; yet was it almost as if a sigh of sorrow arose at the close of the prayer,—as if all felt that these were heaven's strains; and probably in life's long pilgrimage the like would never be heard again.

Whether the subject was Isaiah's vision (Isa. vi. 1-8) we are not prepared to say: from the associations in our mind we incline to think it was; but we cannot surely say.

One illustration in particular we recollect:—an illustration designed to exemplify and enforce firm, unwavering trust in God.

The picture that was drawn was Elijah by the brook Cherith, in the first year of the sore famine in the land of Judea. All is gloom and desolation around. O'erhanging cliffs, bending declivities, darken the valley, deep defiles intermingled therewith; rocks, mountains, glens, ravines extending downward into the earth, far beyond the sight, are blended promiscuously together, and give a character of wildness and sublimity to the spot. Here are hills piled on hills, rocks on rocks, in rude and broken proximity.* Not a sound is to be heard; the wild beasts even have forsaken their lair, and nature, dressed in rudeness and desolation, stands here confessed.

As we send our memory backward through the dim vista of the past, there rises to our eyes the image of the prophet sitting alone in this desolate spot, somewhat like the image of Marius amid the ruins of Carthage, but the *moral* not the same. The effect of relation and association in the two cases is widely different: the one, though alone, is not alone; the other is truly alone—the heart of Marius not purified by adversity, but brooding revenge and feeding the flame of an infuriated ambition.

Not so the Jewish prophet. The living oracle is his. His heart subdued by divine love, his passions all o'er mastered by the Spirit and power of God, he is here in obedience to the heavenly mandate and by the leading of a divine hand. He sought not out the place himself: he knew it not; the streamlet,—some little rill of water,—running here perhaps through some secret fissure of a rock, does not appear to have been known; for, in such a drought, when every drop of water was so precious, no one but the prophet seems to have known of this; nor flock nor herd drew near to drink, nor stray foot of any animal or beast:—nor, indeed, but one bird,—a bird of evil omen,—with dark and flapping wing.

* He draws, as we conceive, from the "Dargle," which he visited in early life; the rude wildness and sublimity of which could never have left his impressible imagination.

That bird! Do we see it? Does the finger, the extended arm, the graceful curvature of the hand, point out the pathway of the bird through the sky, just as dusky night is wrapping in sable gloom the lonesome, silent valley? The prophet knows the hour of the bird's evening visit. Is it the glance of his quivering, tearful eye we see as he raises his head and strains somewhat his sharpened sight to catch the first view of the friendly bird's approach through night's deepening gloom? The flesh and bread of the morning have been consumed: does the prophet feel distrust as to the evening supply? Oh, no! His faith in God is perfect, unattended with a doubt; and soon the dark-winged bird, fresh as when it set out on its lengthened journey, with the flesh and the bread, appears as of aforetime; depositing its little store in the accustomed place, and then winging its way back through the darkness to the distant point—beyond Judea's boundaries—whence it received its daily supply for the prophet,—its own natural instinct for flesh deadened for the present.

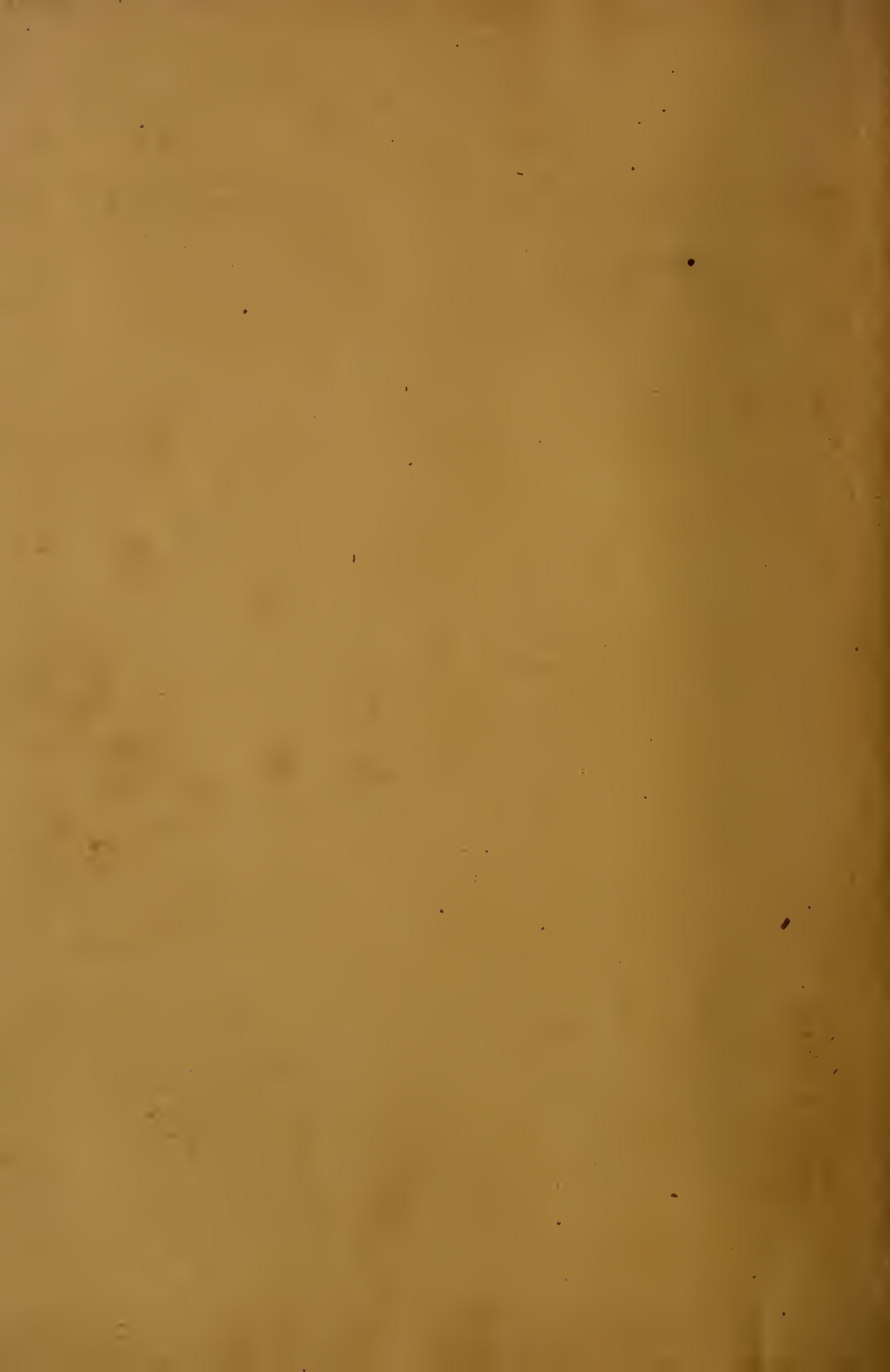
The sombreness of the scene is before our eyes to this day, and the saddened face of the prophet,—his face sad, yet now and then lit up as with a light like that of the kindling blaze on the altar of sacrifice, as he looked through the gloom of the present to the bright future, when the glory to follow should supersede the long and impervious night that had preceded it, when Messiah's reign and kingdom should light up the whole earth, and faith be completely lost and swallowed up in actual sight and unending fruition.

Such somewhat the illustration of holy, perfect trust in God which was drawn this memorable Sabbath evening, and which rises to our memory amid the shadowy images of the past; a scene which has lived in our minds, more or less vividly, ever since.

THE END.







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